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The Changing Faces of Aawambo Musical Arts

Minette Mans
with Ngoma Research Collective

The Changing Faces of Aawambo Musical Arts

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Preface

Trying to confine the diversity of a people's musical practices in one book, even ten, is a daunting and perhaps even impossible task. As an outsider to that culture, it is even more difficult to convey the wealth of information of tonal as well as gestural symbolism, especially through the medium of words. This is, however, the task I undertook when, due to serious illness, I became afraid that the research I and others had done on the musical cultures of different Aawambo groups in north and central Namibia would be lost if the task was not undertaken immediately. More than a decade had passed since collecting the data and it was not fresh in my mind anymore. For this reason I decided to approach a few up-and-coming performing artists in Windhoek who were all Oshiwambo-speaking.[1] My question to them was – would you be interested in collaborating on a writing-research project on Namibia's Aawambo music, dance, and drama traditions, as well as contemporary, mainly urban, developments? The young people, all professional teachers or post-graduate students in the broad performing arts field, were enthusiastic. Thus was the project born.

My second challenging question to each of the four persons was: Why? I knew where my interest had begun, but where did theirs?

As a child in Tsumeb, Namibia, I disappeared from home one day. It was in the early 1950s and I was about three or four years old when I took off on my red tricycle without my mother noticing. I apparently trundled about four blocks down to the central donga (water trickle) that we grandly called "The Jordan River". It split the town in two sections on its way to the copper mine and shaft which commanded a position right in the central business area. Somehow I traversed this area and, not being very noticeable in the hollow of the rivulet, got past the mine fence in the river and continued out and into the area where miners gathered. Maybe it was during a tea break? Anyway, many men were gathered there. Most of these men were there as part of the infamous conscripted labour system of which I, as a privileged white child, was totally unaware. But I was an explorer and despite a vague idea that it was not allowed, needed to find my own way of learning things.

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[1] There is, in fact, no such language as Oshiwambo. The term is merely a locally coined term for the related languages spoken by Aandonga, Aakanyama, Aankwambi, Aankwaluudhi, Aambalanhu and smaller Aawambo groups of people. Only two of these languages have a written form, namely Oshikwanyama and Oshindonga. The numerically smaller western tribes speak dialects that relate strongly to Oshindonga. This has complicated certain terms used in this book, since nobody seems to be quite sure how to write and spell certain lesser known terms. Mistakes in this regard are the author's.

Meanwhile, my parents were frantic, and the entire police force of about three men was searching for me. Then someone noticed and recognized the tracks of the tricycle. How they found me exactly, I don't know, but apparently I was quite happy there at the "compound" with the mineworkers. The family was aghast, and carried on about how lucky I was to survive. In those days the whites so feared the blacks that it was thought that a white child would surely have been murdered. Yet, of the very few vague recollections I have of the incident, fear was not one. I felt completely safe and ensconced by the laughter and acceptance I encountered. I suppose it was one of the men who contacted the mine guards who called the police that led to my speedy "recovery". I do recall one elderly man wagging a finger at me and telling me I was naughty to run away from home, but to come and drink some tea.

This kind of enquiry into the lives of the "other" in the apartheid-torn era of the past, and as the daughter of a magistrate, was severely discouraged. Thus it was only at university in the late Sixties that I began enquiring into African musics. And only much, much later, due to life's vagaries, that I had the opportunity to go back into Oshiwambo-speaking regions to explore indigenous musical practices, to learn about lifestyles in the colonial past, the struggle for independence, and the current post-colonial developments in the musical world.

Similar to this childhood experience, the people of the central northern Namibian plains were always warm and kind to me, courteous and thoughtful. But most of all, the music – its diverse nature and complex sets of rules and values - continued to intrigue and enchant me. Thus, I invited the group of young Namibians to share my passion for rediscovery of our musical cultures, to partner with me on the enterprise to rediscover traditional practices in music, dance and dramatic arts, to unfold some of the meanings and values embedded therein, to investigate contemporary performance developments, and to listen to the voices of people talking about their own music and dance and how they relate to their lives. I encouraged them to explore the reasons for their becoming involved in the project. Their verbatim remarks follow.

Born in Namibia from an Oshikwanyama-speaking man and an Ndonga woman, Ismael Sam grew up in Windhoek and knows only the urban lifestyle: "I can hardly speak my parents' language and don't know nothing about my people." He continues:

> One day Friday afternoon I found myself asked by my seven year old daughter why we speak only Afrikaans in our house. She wanted to know what tribe we are and what our tradition is. She demanded answers because they were given a school assignment on "Know your tradition" and were expected to do a presentation on cultural day where everybody would speak about their cultural background, where they originate from and what their traditions are.

My answer was, we are Oshiwambo-speaking people but I don`t know our culture very well. However she refused to accept my answer. The last words from her were: "How can you do that to us? Now we don`t belong anywhere because I don't know anything about my people. And other kids will laugh me.

I promised her that someday I`m going to do a research on our musical traditions and find out what the meaning and values are that we have in our tradition. Therefore I commit myself to fulfill my promise I made on behalf of every Owambo child who wishes to know the norms of their tradition."

By participating in this project, Mr. Sam is aspiring towards that insight and knowledge. Trixie Munyama tells her story as follows:

I wake up. It's dark. Silhouettes of trees against the moon pass by as the army truck jerks us up and down on a bumpy road, eventually rocking me back to sleep. This is my first memory of my life. This journey brought us to Kwanza Sul in Angola and at that time I was unable to fully grasp the magnitude of what this meant.

I am a child of the liberation struggle who remembers being selected as Captain of the first "Young Pioneers" cultural dance group, singing, stamping and kicking dust in black plimsolls, adorned in blue, red and green outfits. One day I was tired of being the Captain, the one upon whom everyone relied to initiate rehearsals and create new songs. So I decided to hide from my troupe members for a while in the nearby jungle. "Tilikishi! Tilikishi!"[2] I heard them call and the guilt was enough to make me go back and lead my fellow dancers. We performed for important dignitaries from Tate Sema (whom we innocently worshipped), foreign politicians, as well as at weddings and so on.

During full moon periods the sounds of eengoma[3] could be heard within the settlement (it was not a camp, but a community). The ladies who supervised us took this leisure time to heed the call of the drums. I was always enchanted and transfixed by their submergence into the whole experience of music, singing, clapping and movement. This was not a "performance" per se to entertain an audience, it seemed more like a personal experience that each one was having. Theirs was a longing and a connection to "back home" and these moments were bittersweet. I knew then when to be an observer and when to participate and share in their celebration and hope for the future. As clichéd as it may sound, I didn't choose dance. It chose me to use as a medium of expression in the various dance forms it has led me to, including ballet, hip-hop, contemporary, African, Spanish Arabic and a shot at Bengali dance. Traditional dance still has the power to enchant me.

Jacques Sakaria Nashilongweshipwe Mushaandja experiences his cultural journey as follows:

I was born in a village called Oshigambo in the Oshikoto region in northern Namibia. I like to refer to this place as my ancestral land although it is merely a place where my fore-

---

2 A dialect version of Trixie.

3 Drums.

fathers settled after long journeys. It is a place that is dear to my soul and moreover, carries a special kind of a spirit. My father was a contract labourer who lived in Windhoek while my siblings and I were being raised by my mother, aunts and grandparents. It was at the age of six when I had to move to the city to start formal schooling. This was my first memorable encounter of modernisation and urbanisation. Before that, all I knew was village life and everything else around it. This shift did not bode very well for me, since I slowly but surely became a city child. The city had stolen my heart. I became a "Mbwiti" boy growing up in the streets of Katutura. Due to new influences, I found it incredibly hard to strike the balance between the city and my village upbringing. My family is heavily rooted in our cultural norms and values, so my parents made it a point for me to spend every school holiday at the homestead. Although I hated going to the village every holiday, it was there that I had some of the most memorable experiences of my life.

It was during this time that I came to re-engage with different iidhano and learn countless traditional chants from my cousins. These were the times when stories from my early childhood such as "Kaandje na Shimbungu" and "Uuhokololo womathithi" were reiterated every evening. These were the times when we attended numerous festive traditional rituals. In my sub-conscious, I somehow knew that the magic and imaginative power of all of these performative rituals had a bigger meaning because of the way I connected with them. This life journey continued until I enrolled at the university to study classical performing arts so as to eventually become a musical storyteller and theatre-maker. I realized that indigenous forms of performance were a calling I had to answer…

From these experiences above, we can see that there exists a strong calling from the cultural environment to the heart and soul of some persons. This is true even when one has grown up a long distance away from the basic cultural roots. Such was the case with Shishani Vranckx, our fourth contributor.

I remember seeing my aunty cry – beyond tears. I didn't know what was going on. My mother took my sister and I and we got into the car. The next thing I recall was sitting in the airport. Backs against the wall. It was grey, rainy and cold. I wondered what the hell we were doing here. We had emigrated to the Netherlands. Being new in class, not understanding the other kids, being "from Namibia" and the questions asked were all part of that first year. I remember doing a presentation on Namibia in front of class a few years later. Everyone loved it and I felt so proud.

I remember being among my friends, the few black girls in the village I grew up in (Zuidlaren), and I often felt like the only one being so proud of where I came from. I was always so proud of Namibia. Yet I never got to know about my mother's culture, the language or the music. I often asked my mom to teach me how to sing and dance until one day she said: "It's not something you can do alone." My childhood longing for the love of my aunty, the mountains, the smells, the space and the sun are what brought me back to Namibia. The urge to feed that African side in me is what led me to study anthropology and now delve into musicology. Music has been my way to cross cultures, to connect with people, to feel belonging. I know one day I will sing in Oshiwambo as well.

As it happened, I discovered that none of my working group had grown up in the rural Aawambo customs, norms, values and music of Namibia. But from their statements above, their different perspectives and motivations, one reads one clear goal: to know more about Aawambo music, to understand and to share, and in doing so, to develop and grow as a more complete person. These are good reasons to research and write a book. We decided to form a research group to initiate and continue further research into Namibian musics [musical traditions]. This is Ngoma Research Collective, and this book is the first project of that undertaking. Follow us on Facebook at https://www.facebook.com/pages/Ngoma-Research-Collective.

Figs. i. and ii: Team Meeting. From the left – Ismael Sam, Shishani Vranckx, Minette Mans, Trixie Munyama. Far right: Jacques Mushaandja

Materials for this book were gathered on two levels, the first was basic ethnological field research performed by myself (Mans) and student assistants at the time (see accreditations were applicable). In the course of a research project from 1998 – 2000, a large number of recordings were made by Mans and other colleagues. Many people were interviewed. Musical vocabularies were established. Much of this information had yet to be shared with the nation and community at large. In the course of producing this book, these recordings and data were discussed and analysed. A swathe of contemporary musicians was interviewed, as well as traditional healers and shamans, students from rural areas, and a few elders. By performing these research tasks for this book and writing it up under guidance, academic capabilities have been reinforced.

We approached the data as far as possible by telling the stories of musical practices (song, dance, play, stories, action, and instruments) as they were told to us by practitioners of the culture. It was important to me to allow the voices of the people to speak through

our writing and recording. For this reason, readers will find that the language is often very vernacular, and this is retained because it reflects the cultural reality. In addition, the facts that emerged from the oral and observed data might occasionally be contradicting, or lacking certain detail. This arises from the methodology of allowing "real" voices to speak. This implies very individual personal views. Whereas the basic information is generally in agreement with early records by outsiders and current views, individual perspectives might provide alternative insights.

While every effort has been made to provide a comprehensive documentation of musical performing practices, the Aawambo culture is far wider and deeper than this book portrays. Indeed, the more one reads and talks to people, the more you realize that it is not possible to cover all aspects of such a rich culture within the framework of a single book. However, our focus was to provide insight into an area seldom addressed in Namibian cultural studies, namely music, dance and drama of indigenous people, past and present. Every effort was made to check information linguistically, since the different dialects appear to communicate with a certain amount of fluidity. We have chosen to use mainly Oshindonga as the basic language for terminology and spelling, since this was the area where most information had been collected. Wanting to remain accessible to a wide readership further contributed to a style of writing that does not follow the traditional ethnographic modus. We hope, however, that the reader will come to a deeper understanding and greater appreciation of Aawambo musical practices by means of this humble presentation.

The first chapter provides a brief and necessarily superficial historical and contextual background for those who are unfamiliar with this. It focuses on the history as it is reflected in musical practices through the various social and political upheavals of the previous two centuries, as gleaned from existing literature.

Chapter two contextualizes aspects of daily life in rural areas, referring to musical expressions of work, responsibilities, pride, caring and play, of the people who make this music. Since there are many musical expressions that do not qualify as song, and that do not involve dance or musical instruments, they are discussed here, separately from the other more songlike expressions.

Chapter three tells a story about music traditions performed and created by men for their masculine roles as cattle owners, migrant workers, fathers, and so on, but this is a story by a young woman! Her family's circumstances led to her performing men's cattle duties and thus learning to perform the music. Chapter four follows with stories by elderly women about their experiences in older transition rituals that were relinquished after Christianisation. Women's songs tend to be separate musical entities in practice, and

Fig. iii: Sharing videos with children in Ombalanhu, 2000

this chapter explains why. Thereafter, the separate category of musical play is discussed in Chapter five, mainly that of children, but also the fairly similar popular and widespread category for women. Both categories are analysed as related, but separate, entities, with their accompanying movements (dance) and instrumental parts.

Chapter six investigates stories in Aawambo culture. Different types of stories occur in the home or community, but there is also the element of magic and suspense of reality, the drama, that enters when shamen (eenganga) are involved. New directions for shamanic and expressive drama and poetry are investigated. Chapter seven follows many interviews with contemporary musicians, each telling their stories, in total weaving a Namibian and African story of journeys – through war, struggle, peace and new discoveries. It shows how each is finding their way into industry, while still trying to hold onto their root cultural identities.

Finally, Chapter eight draws different strands of performance together theoretically into a cohesive musical world of purpose, practice, and values, thereby providing academic discussion of what is previously fairly informal discussion. Chapter nine contains a few transcribed and notated Aawambo songs that illustrate some of the categories previously discussed. An extensive Glossary can be used as point of reference for further research.

We undertook this journey trying to disentangle old from new, and new from old, seeking roots and changes, discovering and rediscovering a wealth of interesting stories, facts, music, dance, stories and their people, of which we share but a few and celebrate this bounty of culture. It is our hope that it will be shared by many others, and in turn, will lead to many more journeys of discovery.

1 Aawambo People in Namibia: History and Musical Heritage

It is amazing how music tells the history of a culture!

In my explorations into some of the distinctive musical sounds of Aawambo (lit. the-people-with-the-cattle-outposts), interesting aspects of history were revealed. Music confirms much of the known history, but in a most colourful and authentic manner. Thus, the history of kings and their kingdoms is repeated in song, practices such as the relocation and rebuilding of the royal homestead carry specific names for repertoires and actions. Stories and personal histories are chanted. Songs don't lie!

During research trips and reflection afterwards, it became clear to me that both macro world (systems) and micro world (lifeworlds) in this language-related musical practice called for investigation. Keeping in mind the retrospective identity creation of Aawambo as a diverse but related group of people with a partially shared history, and taking into consideration that identities are not fixed expressions of a people, I was drawn to finding different views and narratives of the people through their music, dance, rituals and stories. As Vieux Farka Touré, son of the incomparable, deceased Ali Farka Touré, has said after the Islamist troubles in northern Mali:

Fig. 1.1: Rural scene in Uukwambi

> Music is something very powerful in the human spirit, so it's not just by shaking your finger than you can destroy it. Music has a big impact on all of us because it provides a place for us to come together. It's our meeting place, where we're happy, where there's friendship and companionship. Everything happens around music. It's life. It's as if they attack that part of our life. (Morgan, Feb. 2013)

It's not only musicians who agree with him. Musical practices – which include dances, stories and dramas that are accompanied by music, and even daily activities like shaking the milk gourd, humming or singing – are an intrinsic part of human lives. This is even the more so in Africa, which is arguably best known worldwide for its rich, strong, pervasive and colourful musical traditions. Aawambo social practices, communications, and value systems are well articulated through their musical culture and their active creation of this identity.

Literature is rife with evidence proclaiming that African life could not function normally without music of some kind. This is clearly evidenced by how music tells peoples' stories, whether in Mali's current situation, Namibia's struggle for independence, or Aawambo traditions that document and clarify e.g. women's, men's and children's occupations in their different ways.

Let's look at aspects of the Aawambo (Owambo) history, as known today, through the lens of music. While it is not within the schema of this book to expand on history, this chapter seeks to highlight some of the factors that have influenced musical practices, specifically via an analysis of those known factors.

Fig. 1.2: Front of our home in Outapi, 1999

The central northern part of Namibia has traditionally been the area settled by Aawambo people since about 1550. Consisting of eight main groups ("tribes" or clans, although there are subgroupings called clans), Aawambo are the most populous group in Namibia. Each tribe speaks a somewhat different dialect and only Oshindonga and Oshikwanyama have a substantive written form. Oshikwambi is used for religious purposes in the Roman Catholic Church. The tribes or sub-groups are known by the names Aakwaluudhi, Aakolonkadhi, Eunda, Ovambandja, Aangandjera, Aakwambi, Aambalanhu, Ovakwanyama and Aandonga. Aankwambi, Aangandjera, Aambalanhu, Aankwaluudhi and Aakolonkadhi reside towards the west, Aangandjera in the south, Aandonga south and east, Ovakwanyama in the north and east, and Ovambadja in the north-west.[1] The prefix Oshi- indicates language, whereas O- and Ou- indicate place or region, as in Ongandjera and Oukwanyama.

The northern region is known by its large flat pans of water, tall makalani[2] palms, omusati[3] (mopane) trees, large omigongo[4] (marula) trees and omikwa[5] (baobabs). Homesteads are constructed with omusati wood palisades, grass roofed rooms and open gathering areas such as the oshoto and cooking space (elugo). Contrastingly, there are spread-out towns with countless square mortar block houses and bars painted in wild colours with equally colourful names. The shallow, saline water pans or basins (oshanas) are dry for most of the year, but when the efundja flood brings water in good rainy seasons, they fill with water and small edible fish. When dry, the prevalence of these oshanas has resulted in them being central to much of the social happenings of the people. They are the places where most of the singing and dancing occurred in the past.

This is a densely populated area (for Namibia), and Oshiwambo-speaking people are numerically Namibia's largest group. Over time, and through the contract labour system of the past, Aawambo people have settled in all regions of Namibia, but the central north still remains the cultural heartland of Oshiwambo speakers.

Although Francis Galton, an early European adventurer in 1853 described the region as lush, full of timber trees and "innumerable palms of all sizes"[6] it has become much deforested over the years due to increasing population pressure. The short rainy seasons limit crop production mainly to pearl millet (*omahangu)*[7] and sorghum (*iilya vala*). Ground beans (*eefukwa)*, wild spinach *(omboga)* to make the popular dish *evanda.* Pumpkins are

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1 The Eunda and Ovakwanyama groups can also be found on both sides of the Angolan border.

2 *Hyphaene petersiana*

3 *Colophospermum mopane*

4 *Sclerocarya birrea*

5 *Adansonia digitata*

6 Peltola, 2002, p.9 from Galton's 1853 diary.

7 *Pennisetum spicatum*

also grown, while *eembe* (wild berries from the *omuve* tree[8]), *eenyandi* and *eendunga* are collected from the veld. In rivers and oshanas freshwater fishing is practiced when oshanas are filled, following the efundja flood from the Cuvelai plains.[9]

The importance of both the pastoral and agricultural activities is shown in the prevalence of songs, ceremonies and customs. Many musical events are even today organized according to season, with the most important events happening in the cool dry season after the harvest.

Pre-colonial Kingdoms

While we don't know very much about events in the distant past, we can assume that traditional stories and songs will tell us something about ways of living and certain memorable occasions.

In the first place, there are songs sung by elders that tell us about the migrations of the people. Thus, some of these songs tell of the time when Bantu people from central western Africa migrated east and then south. Songs tell about keeping the embers of the holy fire alive.

There are stories that tell about the arrival of this early migrant group in northern Namibia, probably in the fifteenth century, and how the group split into different "tribes", some (Ovaherero) moving south and west. Others split into two main groups, namely Aandonga and Ovakwanyama. The smaller groupings mentioned earlier occurred over a period of time.[10] Each sub-group had its own king or chieftain (*omukwaniilwa)* from a specific clan, the *aakwanekamba*.[11] Socially, Aawambo are organised into matrilineal clans called *omapata (epata* literally means kitchen). These clans are further sub-divided into numerous lineages or sub-clans, distinguished by symbolic emblems or totems. Different clans observe certain prohibitions (e.g. food taboos) and some are accorded specific social, economic or political roles. The totems are predominantly animals, also a small number of plants and trees, and two Ndonga clans have their skills as emblems, namely carpentry and smithing.[12] Although rulers of the kingdoms belonged to different clans, e.g. Aakwanekamba (hyena) for the Ndonga kings, as well as Ovakwanamakunde, Ovak-

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8 *Berchemia discolor*

9 Pallett, 1994, provides a very simple illustrated guide to the oshana system.

10 Or Mbalantu.

11 Western writers in general appeared not to like the term king, and "downgraded" them to chiefs, headmen, and so on. The roles these leaders played were, however, fully equivalent to kings elsewhere, since they had land, sweeping power of life and death over people, small armies of their own, and were able to trade for power and land with other similar leaders.

12 Estermann 1976 :109, Williams 1988: Appx. III.

waanime (lion) and Ovakwanangobe for the Kwanyama kings, Aakwanambwa (dog) for the Kwaluudhi, Ngandjera and Kwambi kings, Aakwanghwiyo for the Mbalanhu kings, and Ovakwanambwa (dog) for Kwaluudhi kings, they are collectively referred to as *ezimo lyaakwaniilwa*[13].

Written historical evidence confirms the oral history of various Aawambo kingdoms in previous centuries.[14] They were known for their prosperity, based on effective use of the land in a sedentary combination of pastoralism and agriculture. The terms *ohamba* (Kwanyama) and *omukwaniilwa* (Ndonga) mean king (or paramount chief).[15]

Kings controlled most aspects of societal organisation, e.g., land ownership and usage, seasonal agricultural decisions, major social events, as well as decisions regarding crimes, warfare and other social issues. The kingdom was divided into districts *(iikandjo)* and these districts were run by the senior headmen *(omalenga),* who formed a council which also advised the king. Districts were subdivided into wards *(omikunda)* and were run on a day to day basis by headmen *(ooyeni omikunda)* "Ceremonies and rituals such as traditional marriage, and rain-making were viewed as political because they were under the direct control of the kings or local headmen … Each ceremony or ritual has its leader with the responsibility as delegated to him or her by the headman or king."[16] Following the first colonial intrusions by the Portuguese towards the north (Angola) and British in the south, battles followed. One by one kings lost power and territory and during South African occupation were replaced by "cooperative kings and senior headmen"[17] who held authority in a system of indirect control by South African officials such as the Native Administrators appointed in the area. In post-independence Namibia kingships supported by Traditional Authorities, were restored, but the existence

Fig. 1.3: Efundja causing Ekuma River to flow slowly into Etosha

[13] Shigwedha 2004, p. 15.
[14] See Salokoski's (2006) in-depth description and analysis of the pre-colonial Aawambo kingdoms.
[15] See description of his personal experiences and perceptions, in Andersson, 1875.
[16] See Nampala & Shigwedha, 2006 for detailed background on pre-Christian rituals and ceremonies.
[17] Hayes, 1992.

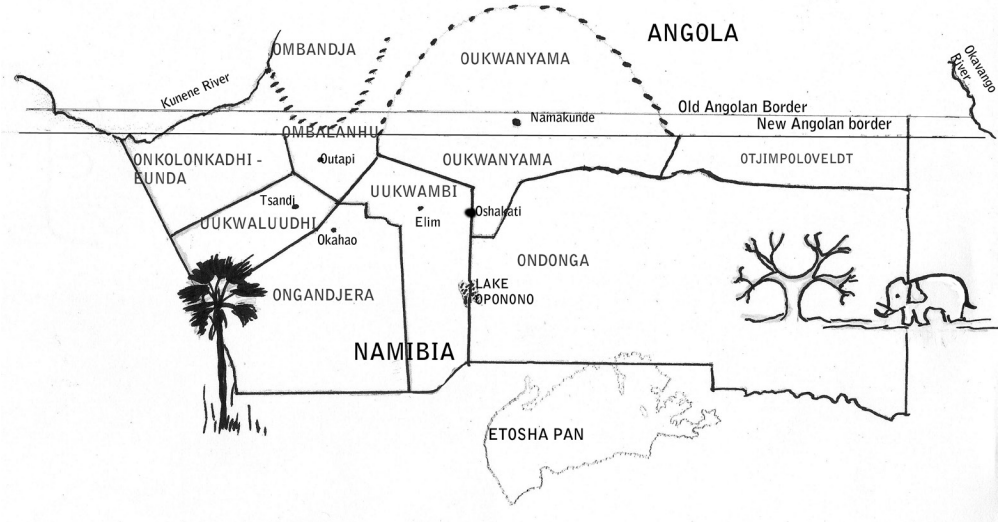

Fig. 1.4: Map of pre-colonial and colonial Kingdoms

of kingdoms and their territorial borders are contested by royal lines as well as the people.[18] Nevertheless, despite the official political regions being named Omusati, Oshikoto, Ohangwena and Oshana Regions, people still refer to areas according to previous ethnic groupings and kingdoms, e.g. Oukwanyama, Uukwaluudhi and so on.[19]

Songs provide an engaging and enduring insight into the lives of early kings. In pre-colonial times, songs were sung to celebrate the kings, their lineage, their histories, and their cattle. Some of these types of songs are still in existence and sung on occasion. People I spoke to, however, were more keen to talk about the rituals and procedures surrounding kings' lives. For example, when a king died, cattle were slaughtered and the king's body was wrapped in a skin and buried. This wrapping was called *ombanza ongombe.* The king was buried at his own homestead, and the funeral ceremony is called *oshinkono*. A new royal house (ombala) was then built for the new king, and the old palace burnt down.[20] Songs that accompany and describe this event are called i*iyimbo*[21] *yokwiinyanyudha* in Oshindonga (although this term is generic and used for other song types as well) or iiyimbo yaalumentu, played with etenda (literally – be awake). These songs and chants are only for men.

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18 See Dobler, 2008 and Brambilla (n.d.) for extensive discussion on borders in the region.

19 Interestingly, Oukwanyama currently has its first queen (ohamba), Martha Mwadinomho ya Christian ya Nelumbu since 2005 (Shiweda, 2011).

20 Currently royal families in certain areas live in brick homes in peri-urban areas and are unlikely to continue this practice!

21 Iiyimbo is the (plural) term for songs. Oshiimbo in Oshikwanyama.

Songs also record the lineage of kings, from as far back as about 1650. The Ondonga royal lineage, for example, is captivatingly described in H. D. Namuhuja's The Royal Ondonga Kings (1996). Some of the chants tell the stories of individual kings, e.g., Ondonga King Shikongo shaKalulu (1858–1874) who defeated his brother Shipanga with the help of Ovakwanyama, was remembered thus:[22]

Osimu yolumoho yaKalulu
Amumbindja gwolumoho gwaNambahu
Amushila gwa tsima ta zi kOkashana
Amupembe gwa toka ta zi kOnandoya
Ta zi miihenguti yAashimba
Amutsa makaya matoye lela
Gaa hilwa kumukwankala
Moshilongo iho opalele mo
Omukuti he ko opalela

A left-handed king of Kalulu
A left-handed T-shirt of Nambahu
A dusty trail from Okashana
A dusty special tail from Onandoya
Coming from the reeds of the Aashimba
The preparer of delicious tobacco
That cannot be smoked by a Bushman
He does not fit (is not fit?) to stay inland
He only fits in the forest.

It is only through these few remembered songs, and through narrations of lineage and folk tales that the kings of the pre-missionary past are remembered. Namuhuja,[23] e.g., quotes a praise song for King Eino Johannes Yanamene (Sheepo)[24] as follows:

Onguti yaKamushimba
YooNamene Sheepo
(ya tuka) tayi lambele poombunda
Dhaambo yaa nevuliko.

A dove of Kamushimba
Of Namene's Sheepo
The one that flies up and lands
On the backs of those who break the law.

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22 Namuhuja, 1996, p. 19
23 Namuhuja, 1996, p. 44
24 Sheepo reigned from 1942 until 1960.

Similarly, the story continues in a song that was composed for a young woman (Amutse GwaKakunya) who was to go to Windhoek to give evidence at Sheepo's trial for murder (before he became king). This song was composed for her by her friends:

Nda tila ngame Amutse gwaKakunya
Otii ka sa nenge otii ka galuka
Nda tila ngame Amutse gwaKakunya

I myself am afraid, Amutse gwaKakunya
Am I going to die or will I come back?
I myself am afraid, Amutse gwaKakunya.[25]

Many important age-related and seasonal events were celebrated in song long before European culture began to impose itself in the north. In fact, seasonal events were perhaps the most important way of categorising music. These include *Oshipe shomahangu* (harvest festival), *Omagongo* (marula harvest drink), *Epena* (last ceremony of the year) and *Omwai* (New Year ceremony of commoners).[26] All of these events included specific music and, e.g., special praise songs were sung for omagongo. Dancing and singing were involved in *oshipe* and *epena,*[27] the latter also including two large drums. In the dry season people sang *oshipupu* songs, but were limited to dry season and ended when rains began. Seasonal activities such as harvests in this area were proclaimed by kings. Thus, when the *omahangu* was ripe in the fields, the king decided when the correct time for harvesting had arrived. His own fields would be the first to be harvested as a community effort by his people. Thereafter they were able to harvest their own. The king's harvest would be generally celebrated by musical performance. At times, such as in May 1999, people in Ongandjera were concerned that their own crops were drying out, while King Japhet had not yet called for the harvest. Fortunately, this was rectified and I had the privilege of being in the fields while he inspected the crops, while the locals were harvesting and threshing, and for celebrations (*oshipe shomahangu*) and playing of iidhano near the royal house. Marula[28] harvesting was also of cultural importance and various products produced from the wild fruit. Songs that emanate from this practice includes *oshiimbo shomagongo* (*oshipe shomaongo*) – songs that are dedicated to the new marula harvest and drinking marula liquor songs.

Events and life stages in human lives were equally important. Every age class was named and often noted by a specific hairstyle for girls and women, and often also for

[25] Namuhuja, 1996, p. 42
[26] Löytty, 2012, p. 41.
[27] The term epena provides us with a link to epera, the harvest celebrations in Kwangali culture, Kavango, just to the east of Oukwanyama.
[28] *Sclerocarya caffra*.

boys and men. Especially when puberty was reached, girls wore specific, quite elaborate hairstyles, and each succeeding stage was formalised by a new hairstyle.[29] For example, the coming of age of young women, that is, the time when they were considered ready for marriage was a big event. *Efundula* in Oukwanyama, *olufuko* (Ombalanhu, Uukwaluudhi and Ongandjera), and *ohango*[30] in Ondonga was the custom during which young women were selected to go to the king's court to be inducted into the many mysteries of womanhood. Women about to attend such a ceremony were adorned with a particular hairstyle which indicated she was a "bride". Following the ceremony, her hair would be shorn and a shorter but equally elaborate hairstyle followed. Described in detail further on in this book, these large regional *efundula* and *olufuko* ceremonies, lasting for up to ten days in old times, were deeply embedded in song *(oshiimbo shohango, iiyiimbo yohango, or oshiimbo shefundula),* and dance. In *efundula* this included drumming. In addition, there were songs that preceded the actual *olufuko,* but were associated directly with the traditional marriage. For example, in Ombalanhu brides would sing *nangalala* while stamping the *omahangu* to take to the event, and also while walking in procession to the site of the initiation. In Ongandjera *ekoteko* was played by older women, while a Kwambi father would give his daughter a special song *(iikuni)* with a small piece of wood, and *onano* were songs composed by the prospective groom for a bride who has passed the test. Many changes were to take place, however, and many of the impositions were hotly contested by Aawambo.

Long before the arrival of the first Europeans, Aawambo people mined and controlled trade in iron ore, salt, and copper.[31] Since ancient times, it appears that one of the ways in which young men proved themselves, and also contributed to regional trade, was to perform a long trek by foot to the salt pans where they gathered up salt, and transported the heavy salt bags back to their district centres – on their backs. During this difficult and dangerous journey, many songs were sung about the hardships, the dangers and the hopes for an increase in wealth. Song types included:[32]

- Travel songs – *ondundwiilandjimbo* sung and/or played when travelling some distance, e.g. to the mines, salt pans, or taking cattle to a distant post

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[29] See Scherz, Scherz, Taapopi and Otto, 1992, for wonderful historical pictures that illustrate this beautifully.

[30] The term ohango later came to mean a Christian wedding and has become a general term in all areas for a formal wedding. But in the past it referred to the girls' initiation (or traditional wedding) according to informants and writings by early missionaries Hahn and Rautanen.

[31] Sparks & Liebenberg, 1992.

[32] According to O. Shigwedha, 2003.

- Loneliness songs – *iiyimbo yuupongo* (eponga means homesickness, epongo a homeless person)
- Confidence songs – *iiyimbo yo kekango yomongwa* and *otaiingi okango* – were sung to encourage one another and to keep going.

Quite naturally for an agricultural folk, there were songs for chores like threshing, hoeing, and harvesting. Songs were sung for and by:

- hunters – *(iiyimbo yaakongo)*
- herders – *uusita* (Kwaluudhi), *ousita* (Mbalanhu), *okuyungula* (Ndonga), *omushua* or *omuxua* (Kwambi);
- warriors – *ekandanga* (Mbalanhu), *ehonga* (Kwambi), *uutoni* after a successful battle (Kwanyama), and *omunghelo* after killing a lion;
- songs for cattle – *ongovela yomutembu, ongovela ta didana,* or *ongovela yeengobe;*
- milk gourd shaking – *ondjupa* (Kwaluudhi and Kwambi), *ongowela tahiki* (Mbalanhu).

Cattle praising songs were (and remain) of great importance, and were sung in the celebration of *oshipe* (new harvest) when the host of the feast (usually a rich or important man) called for the cattle to be gathered. The entrance to the cattle pen was smeared with butter and guests were offered milk to drink. This was the time when *ongovela* would be sung for the cattle. There was much praise for the best singer (see discussion on *ongovela* in Chapter 3.8). The singer chants a text to which the chorus responds with a repeated responsorial pattern. The singer usually holds a hunting bow in one hand to gesticulate, and/or uses arm movements in a cattle horn formation. Some few dance steps might also be performed by soloists.

The above list excludes all the personal songs people sang praising their own lineages. *Elitango* is the term for praise chants, while *okwiitanga* is chanted at, e.g., *okufu* before the harvest, or to praise the bride at *olufuko,* or to praise one's own lineage. Songs associated with traditional healings, using *omakola* (double-gourd bow) were *oshiimbo shomakola.* Babies were (are) soothed by *uuimbilo wokuloolola uunona* [33] soothing of babies, also referred to as *okuloolola okaana* [34] (Kwanyama). These songs, still commonly used, are more like vocalisations of sounds, not words, which soothe an infant to sleep. In such

[33] Okuloolola means to sing or chant, and uunona means small children or infants.

[34] Okaana means small child, and okulolola means to soothe, and okuloloka kusha infers being tired or sleepy.

soothing there might also appear small snatches of a song or a story. At the birth of a baby several different types of songs might be sung at the *epitifo* (*eepitho)* ceremony and people are likely to play *Oshike shetu eta* (What has made us come here?) or *otshe tehe tu eta)*. There were and are also *eenhembu,* where a mother plays rhythmic games with a small child, often while riding on her knee. The mother then taps the rhythms with a finger on the baby's back. This is the beginning of learning the classical rhythms of their own culture.

These are only some of the types of Aawambo musical performances that have endured through the past two centuries. From this list it can be seen that songs and their accompanying movements or actions have been deeply embedded in peoples' lives. Unfortunately, not many of the oldest songs survive – a situation which is typical of almost all cultures. But fortunately my research has shown that while the words of songs in this region change quite rapidly as life goes on, the melodies and movements are slower to change and still give us some indication of the musical world of a century or two ago.

Encountering the Christian Missionaries

When the first European adventurer-travellers visited King Nangolo Dhaamutenya's court in 1851, they were refused the free passage to the Kunene which they desired. They returned south to Uushimba (areas south of Tsumeb) and informed the Rhenish Missionary Society about conditions in the north. The Society then sent Hugo Hahn and Johannes Rath northwards in 1857 with hunters and a trader in the hope of establishing a mission there. Again refused permission to venture further north, the group were forced to return to Uushimbo. Nangolo's warriors followed the group, encircled and attacked them and Nangolo's son Nakanyala was killed in the battle. The aims of the missions were to bring Christianity to the local inhabitants, totally ignoring the existing system of religion and beliefs that were in existence. Thus were the importance of Kalunga (God) and the entire framework of ancestor spirits dismissed as barbaric, and attempts made to bring in a new God and a new set of values.

In 1867, the Finnish Missionary Society decided to send its workers to the Aawambo people south of the Kunene, of whom they had been informed via Carl Hugo Hahn's Rhenish visit in 1857 and his lectures in Finland in 1862.[35] During early missionary times, it was the Finnish missionaries who were most successful in their task in the Aawambo kingdoms. Persons such as "Nakambale" Martin Rautanen became a well-known figure amongst Aawambo people in his 50 years of mission work. Rautanen's personal collection

[35] See Peltola, 2002, for a full description of the work of Dr. Martin Rautanen (Nakambale).

of "Ambo" objects and his detailed information on them appears in a Finnish publication "*Ambomaan Kokoelma*" (Martti Rautanen's Ambo Collection)[36] and shows that in the 19th century there were instruments similar to those that remain in existence today. For example, the *okahumba* (a seven-bowed pluriarc), various *ositi* (rattles), and *ohija* (a whistle manufactured from horn to signal hunters and warriors) can still be found today. In his time, Rautanen converted many Aawambo and even Mutaleni, the king's mother, insisted upon learning to read and she converted. Both the Rhenish and Finnish missionaries were negative about some of the cultural practices, considering them not in the best interests of spreading the Christian message. Especially music involving drums, trance, and lively dance alongside other "darker" practices slowly became undesirable. The kings were urged to forbid *ohango* and *efundula.* Under pressure from others King Martin (Nambala) Kadhikwa, who was Christian, in 1920 began to fine non-believers whose daughters underwent *ohango*. Similarly, the *omakola* (see Fig. 1.5) was "banned" by the church, which saw it as an instrument of evil, since it was associated with traditional healings. The Christians saw such healings as the terrain of witchdoctors and therefore "satanic". In Fig. 1.6 Finnish Mission archives show the impact of change beginning in the clothing worn by members of a royal family well known to Nakambale.

Fig. 1.5: Omakola in the foreground

In Oukwanyama, the Rhenish Missionary Society assisted the Finnish Mission and founded a mission station at Ondjiva in 1891. This later became part of Angola. However, in 1916 the Rhenish missionaries had to leave the area under pressure from the Portuguese authorities and chief Mandume of the Kwanyama. When they departed, two elders, Simson Shituwa and Wilhelm Kafita took over the leadership of these churches and developed several new churches.[37] Lighter entertainment dance-play such as *uudhano (oudano)* and *ongovela* songs were, oddly enough, considered acceptable.

In times prior to the Christianization of Aawambo, women wore hairstyles that indicated their age group, and also whether they had undergone the all-important *efundula, olufuko* or *ohango.* In Outapi at her home Kuku Malyana Ishitile, locally known as Maria Mbwadha (in her late 60s at the time), told me the following (rough translation):

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36 Published by Museuvirasto, National Museum of Finland, 1983.

37 See Buys, G. and Nambala, S. (2003), http://www.dacb.org/stories/namibia/shituwa-kafita.html

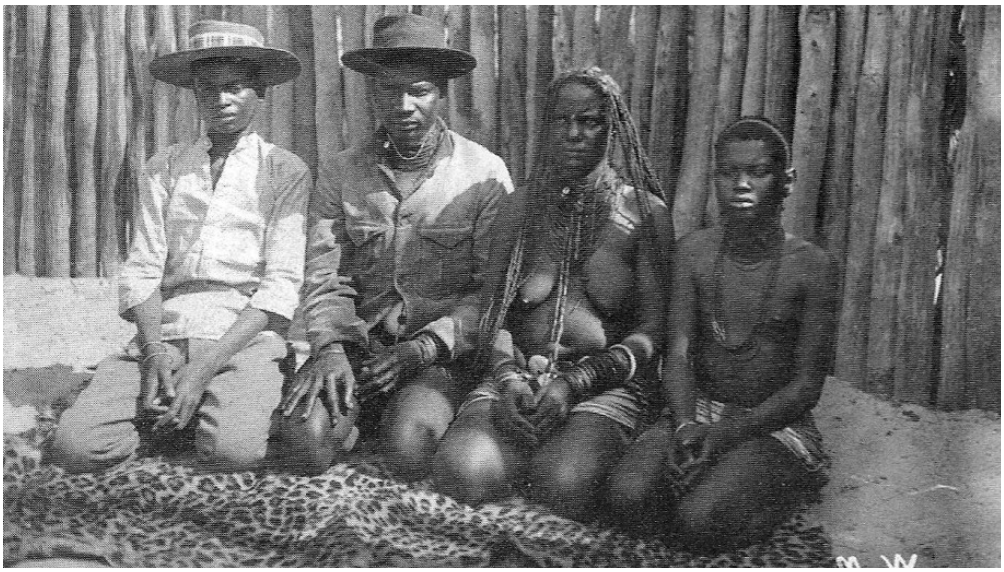

Fig. 1.6: King Kambonde's relatives and mother Mutaleni (Peltola, 2002)

> We all grew our hair according to the Mbalantu customs. Me, I went through all the stages. Shortly before olufuko was to take place, the older women plaited my hair for the elende style. Before we started to go to olufuko, the braids were cut off and kept, and red stringy bits were made from parts of the cut off hair. These red bits had to hang over our faces. It was the father's decision when a girl should go, and the mother should agree. Olufuko season here in Ombalanhu is cool dry season (early winter, May). We had to pound the millet for beer and put this in a large basket. The people drank omulovu beer and feasted for two days and we pounded and pounded. Then we had to walk to the namunganga's house. We sang nangalala as we pounded the mahangu and as we walked to the namunganga's place. We brides could play ouvano there, but at the namunganga's house we sang ohale and praised our families. When we had passed through olufuko, we changed our hair to omhatela *(see Figs. 1.7 and 1.8)*. But later, after some years, I converted to Christianity and cut off my omhatela because I was told it was pagan (sic). I never wore my hair like that again. *(She thinks for a while.)* There are three namunganga's places nearby here [a small distance from Outapi]. My father was namunganga. *(Pause.)* But now, we play all the cultural dances – even for the President Sam Nujoma. So we wear the traditional Mbalantu clothes and we make omhatela like a hat that I can wear on my head.
>
> Q: Are you proud to wear omhatela now?
>
> MM: Yes, I am proud, because not many girls go to olufuko these days. Olufuko was important to me. But now it is a hat. *(She laughs.)*

In Ongandjera and elsewhere, I filmed women in traditional dress with contemporary forms of the customary hairstyles of previous times that are now manufactured

Fig. 1.7: Maria Mbwadha's omhatela hat

Fig. 1.8: Original omhatela

as attachments to their hair. Some women wore the long curved "horns" of hair and fibre *(iipando)*, while others wore a small pot-shaped "hat" *(omutisha)* on the back of the head, representing the manner in which it was previously worn after olufuko. In addition to such seemingly superficial changes, Christianity brought with it radical familial changes by demonising the previously common practice of polygamy and demanding monogamy as the only state acceptable to Christianity, stopping short only of demanding monogamy as a qualification for a happy afterlife.

In a 1984 edition of *Namibia Today* the following statement was made:

> The rather widespread acceptance of Christian religion, over a period of one and a half century, has made a significant imprint on the Namibian music. There has been a strong infusion of religious content into it. The exciting rhythms of the traditional drum music was [sic], to a large extent, replaced by the solemn melody of Christian religious songs.[38]

The influence of missionaries extended further and had some positive influences, with many of the missionaries devoting themselves to the education and "upliftment" of the people they were serving. Until people were baptized and gave up most of their customs and traditional beliefs, they were considered heathens and in need of help. Thus, missionaries acted as teachers, teaching people to read so that they could read the bible and follow the church liturgy. For the Christianization to be successful, the missionaries realized that there had to be some symbolic central ground where the colonial religious values and meanings met the indigenous religious values and meanings. In both Christianity and indigenous cultures music had a central place through which people expressed their religious and cultural ideas and their emotions.[39]

With the liturgy (the mass of the Evangelical Lutheran Church and the Roman Catholic Church), the missions introduced the Aawambo people to hymns. According to Löytty,[40] these were accompanied by the typical four part harmonies[41] being played on a harmonium by a missionary. By listening and imitating, singers developed their sense of Western four part harmonising. Singers were not necessarily divided into definite groups, but could change from one part to another within the course of a song, if it suited the singer. The singing of multipart songs was not foreign to the local people and they rapidly adopted the hymns as a new and important form of socialising music. The reader is referred to the interesting descriptions of missionary music – past and present – in

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38 From an article entitled "The cultural dimension of the anti-colonial struggle in Namibia" appearing in the 1984 issue of Namibia Today.

39 Löytty, 2012, p.188. See also Hangula, 1998.

40 Löytty, 2012.

41 The four parts are made up of Soprano (ewi lyotango), Alto (etiyaali), Tenor (otenule) and Bass (omubaatha), according to Kambudu (1990) as cited by Löytty, 2012, p.101.

the book by an Oshiwambo-speaking ELCIN worker, Sakari Löytty, entitled "*Peoples' Church – Peoples' Music"* (2012) (see references).

From older songs still in existence, and from ethnomusicology research done by Hugh Tracey in northern Namibia in 1965, it appeared that the indigenous equidistant seven tone scale[42] was near enough to the newly introduced European diatonic seven tone scale. Considering that neighbouring musical cultures in the Kavango sing mainly in five tone (pentatonic) structures, the adjustment appears to have happened more easily amongst Aawambo. But, since the majority of melodies (ongowela) in this area are accompanied by a second voice, an interval of a third lower or higher, something more easily accomplished in equidistant structures, the hymns retained something of their local colour and sound. In the final analysis, however, congregational singing and various choral groups became an intrinsic part of the Aawambo musical world.

However, the form structure of hymns in Europe is seldom that of a caller and choral response. Amongst Aawambo, many hymns took on this new indigenous adaptation, with a caller initiating the hymn followed by the chorus. One can imagine that at first the changes were subtle, but currently, the hymns have been well indigenised. The call and its response often overlap, i.e. the call continues slightly beyond the entry of the response, contributing to a more flowing structure.

In addition, the rhythmic structure of local Oshiwambo hymns over time became characterised by a placement of emphasis on the upbeat of the hymn, imbuing it with a more "relaxed" rhythm and coinciding better with indigenous rhythmic patterns as exemplified in dances, e.g. uudhano, which often uses triple pulses.

In addition to the harmonic singing facilitated by the harmonium, brass instruments were introduced in the churches. Since the Aawambo already made use of horns and whistles in pre-colonial times, many persons (men, mainly) took happily to these new instruments. I recall as a child in Tsumeb in the 1950s, how brass bands of Aawambo and Herero men used to march and perform in the streets on important Christian holy days. The rousing sound called everybody out to listen and to cheer.

From all these influences (some of which it must be said were bi-directional) new categories of Aawambo music emerged:

- New Hymns, e.g. in the hymn book *Ehangano* (Evangelical Lutheran Church in Namibia)
- New melodies called *elongelokalunga enene epe*

[42] Meaning that each of the seven steps of the scale is at an equal distance from the other. In contrast, the Western diatonic scale consists of steps of unequal distance, being made up of semitones and whole tones.

- New chorus songs, with rhythmic movements, called *uukorasa* (sing. *okakorasa*) – sung by young people before entering church, or at competitions (equally popular in the Catholic community) and originating mainly with the Student Christian Movement.

- New youth songs, often with instrumental accompaniment, called *omaimbilo ovanyasha.*

To a greater or lesser extent, all of these songs contained elements of the Western church's music as well as the indigenous Aawambo music.[43] Clearly, the musical history of the north-central people underwent significant changes in the course of their encounter with different missions. But these changes should also be seen in the light of the entire colonisation process, whereby formal education was introduced, migrant labour increased, and access to radio broadcasts became the order of the day during the apartheid era especially.

The South African Apartheid Era

The influence of the South African colonialism that followed that of the German and British regimes (which were short-lived) had a direct impact on the economic activities, the social structure, and the culture (thus music) of local populations. Prior to the armed struggle of the 1960s – 1989, the nature of the apartheid regime of South Africa led to enforced labour migrations, change of masculine-feminine roles in daily lives, a stronger adherence to cash culture and the acquisition of new technologies for personal use. But at the same time there was a lack of economic welfare and infrastructure development in the region, which like other Namibian spaces was rezoned as a "Native Reserve" with a Native Commissioner appointed in charge – and in a palatial home.

More insidious was the promotion of new, imposed values that suggested European practices as innately superior. Thus Western musical instruments, songs and eventually dances, subtly invaded traditional spaces and became accepted as "better" than indigenous practices. This contributed to the rapid assimilation of Western musical characteristics.[44]

The powers of the kings were eroded and replaced with Western governance in the form of police, courts, education system and economic systems – cash trading and the emphasis on material goods. In several cases, those who replaced the existing rulers (chiefs and kings from specific clans) were appointed by the colonial government as a means of

[43] See Löytty, 2012, and Haugh, 2014 under References, for extensive scholarly discussions.
[44] See discussion in Mans, 2002, pp. 262–265.

control, and came to be named as "traditional leaders" without having used the previous generational, familial and gender hierarchies.

One of the hardest aspects to bear was the system of migrant labour, the contract labour system (1926) under which younger Aawambo, Herero and Kavango men were "recruited", classified according to age, fitness and strength and then assigned to mines, railways or farms. Thus the labour migrations replaced the salt collecting and trading migrations that were part of pre-colonial practices (although there were labour migrations before the contract system, as photographs from the 1890s – 1920s show.)[45] However, in contrast with the arduous nature of earlier salt and metal gathering journeys, made once in a lifetime, the contract system repeatedly withdrew large numbers of men from their communities, usually for two years at a time. Often, these men acquired new tastes in music, fashion and lifestyles, and brought these new influences back upon their return to the north.[46] The phenomenon of the ombwiiti "those that have lost touch with their culture" started during this contract labour system.

This absence of men from their communities meant that women and children took over many of the chores. These changes are reflected in the music as an increase in the songs of loneliness and suffering amongst the men, and the adoption of some of the male voice parts by women in their songs. Hunting and warrior songs of previous times began to disappear, while the adoption of church songs (hymnal) became more pronounced among the men who resided in towns. Women, on the other hand, remained closer to their regional musical practices. Women's roles within the family took on a stronger character, since they were in many cases the sole carers for their families. Their tasks were thus enlarged both in quantity and quality.

Since many of the men located in towns took second wives and embraced the more diverse social life of townships, relationships with original wives became strained. Despite this, however, women remained north of the "Red Line" as a well-rooted cultural background and solidarity when it came to the progress of especially northern people into resistance and revolution against South Africa and its repressive racist rule.

In urban centres such as Windhoek, Tsumeb, and others, apartheid meant that there was little or no social mixing (allowed) between black and white people. Entertainment for Oshiwambo speakers working in towns was therefore relegated to so-called "township" or "location" entertainment centres. Here one could find bands made up of musicians from various different cultural grouping, finding new forms of expression through their dance music. Radio broadcasts through the South African Broadcasting Corpora-

[45] Photographs available at the National Library and Archives of Namibia.

[46] As written by Shishani in an unpublished essay entitled "Voyage of the Aawambo People", 2015.

tion (later Namibian Broadcasting Corporation) eventually began to air stations in indigenous languages in 1969, and it was here that the popular musical style of musicians such as Tate Kwela began to make an appearance.

The Armed Struggle for Independence

One might think that revolution has little to do with musical culture, but this is not so. Not only did people take their own cultural backgrounds into the struggle with them, the nature of the resistance struggle, living in exile and in military camps, acted as a creative pressure cooker. Many Namibians found the racial discrimination imposed by the South African Government untenable – at home and with sympathisers in many other countries. In 1960 the South West African Peoples' Organisation (SWAPO) was born and many petitions to the United Nations Organisation followed. In 1973 SWAPO was officially named as the only authentic and legitimate spokesperson for the people of this country. The struggle became an armed struggle as forces of South Africa (SADF) moved into northern regions and brought the South West Africa Territorial Force (SWATF) into being. SWAPO formed its own fighting force, the Peoples' Liberation Army of Namibia (PLAN). Fighting began. Many fled the country and new SWAPO settlements were begun in Angola and Zambia with the permission of those countries' governments. Kwanza Sul in Angola was one of the largest of the settlements, established in 1979. Here a programme was begun to educate children in an "Alphabetisation Campaign" – away from the abhorred Bantu Education system. Medical personnel, teachers and necessary materials were somehow provided by other countries and institutions (UNESCO, Germany, Sweden, Norway, and others) and programmes were initiated to develop curricula especially aimed at the needs of these "struggle children". Most of the schooling took place out of doors, sitting on logs and writing on laps, and materials were scarce.

From all accounts music and dance became a central rallying point of people – soldiers, teachers, children, women – in the militarised communities. When children went to fetch wood in the mornings, they would sing as they returned with wood carried on their heads. School days were begun with song. Music was a means of expression of the identity of different groups, and at the same time it was a melting pot for the different musical cultures which met and shared lives in exile.

While SWAPO membership was certainly not limited to any single cultural entity, the core of the liberation organization was largely rooted in Oshiwambo-speaking communities. During the struggle, new songs were assimilated and borrowed from other Namibian musical cultures as well as South African, Zimbabwean, Zambian and Angolan cultures.

Children, especially, were open to receiving all the new sound and language combinations, performance styles and forms.

Understandably, many of the songs were patriotic praise songs, praising the struggle leaders, vilifying the enemy leaders, praising SWAPO, praising PLAN, and looking forward to a liberated Namibia. Songs types that in the past praised kings and other heroes now began to focus on political and war heroes. Songs were also used to transmit messages that SADF could not understand, but which reminded people of their loyalties in the struggle. Here are the lyrics of one such a song:

Solo:	Chorus:
Namibia evi lyetu	*eeno atu lilwile*
Lina okawe nongopolo	*eeno atu lilwile*
Lina omapya noimuna	*eeno atu lilwile*
Lina ondula ina efuta	*eeno atu lilwile*
Omakusi ya opala	*eeno atu lilwile*

Translation:	
Namibia is ours	Yes we fight for it
It has diamonds and copper	Yes we fight for it
Animals in the veld	Yes we fight for it
It has rain and the ocean	Yes we fight for it

In some cases older traditional songs were performed, as mentioned, especially by mature persons mainly to reaffirm a group's cultural identity and to keep alive memories of home and life. Volunteer educator and researcher Sabine Zinke (see References) not only recorded many examples of music during her years at Kwanza Sul, but went back to teach these songs to Aawambo children in exile in Eastern Germany, thereby strengthening their sense of identity.

Later on in this 30 year period, performing groups were established and funded to support the struggle and PLAN. Thus the creation of "The Young Pioneers ", a performing troupe made up of youngsters from the camps, was established. As Trixie Munyama recalls:

> The Young Pioneers groups were created by the Cultural Division of the liberation struggle elders as a way to keep the cultural songs and dances alive and impart these skills to the "children of the liberation struggle". To instill in us our cultural values/practices and remind us of where we came from although we have never been to Namibia. The camps were seen as a transit point for our return. Every activity in the camp was made to prepare us for our lives back home.

Thus, a cultural troupe, Ndilimani, was brought into life in 1980, conceived in Lubango Military Headquarters of the Peoples' Liberation Army of Namibia under the leader-

ship of the late Peter Enias Nanyemba. The aim of Ndilimani's work was to mobilize the peoples of the world to rally around the cause of the SWAPO Party. This band's musical development forms a history in and of itself, and will be discussed further on. Suffice it to say here that it originally started out with the use of brass instruments and recalled the church music (discussed above) to mind. As times changed and musicians travelled, meeting other musicians not only in the army camps, but also in other countries (e.g., Britain, Sweden, Norway, and so on) their music was adapted to become more in line with popular movements of the time. Changing membership led to musical changes, largely dependent on the musical skills of members. Contact with different African musicians led to the popular Congolese rhumba with its swinging rhythm and catchy guitar riffs becoming part of the sound of Ndilimani. This trend continues today. Electric guitars, amplifiers and other electronics were incorporated into Ndilimani's music. In an interview with Shishani Vranckx (2013), Ras Sheehama tells it as follows:

> Namibia was not a conducive place at that present time of colonialism and apartheid. So I had to go somewhere else. And definitely, there was the revolution. People could cross to Angola to join SWAPO. So I said, to be free, and to do whatever I want, I would have to go into exile. If I go to the camps of SWAPO, I might be able to get a guitar there. Because it even came into my parents. If I would have asked my father that time to buy me a guitar, it's a taboo!
>
> He'd say: "What? A guitar?! "
>
> So I had to go into exile. Angola first. I met Jackson [Kaujeua] in Kwanza Sul. But I heard his music already through the SWAPO radio because you could pick it up from Luanda in Owamboland. So I heard his music already. So I go to Angola, go to the education center. Here I meet Jackson playing "Independence on earth…" And I said "Oh, this is the guy." But I was young. But we always used to hang. We wake up in the morning on Saturday. Monday to Friday we go to school. So Saturday morning we have nothing to do. So we wake up and go to Jackson Kaujeua's tent.
>
> And sometimes he'd say: "What do you guys want?!" we'd say: "No, just play us one song."
>
> He'd say "Ok, I'll get my guitar."
>
> And he'd play half a song and say: "Ok, now go home, I'm tired. Unless you come in the afternoon."
>
> That's where it kicked off. Then I went to Zambia. That's where I got hold of my first, I think self-made guitar from a Zambian soldier. *(Interview Shishani Vranckx)*

Ras's singing in Oshiwambo was new for Namibian musicians. His song "Cassinga", commemorating the South African massacre of hundreds of Namibians in a SWAPO refugee camp in Cassinga (southern Angola, 1978), made him a national icon.

Jackson Wahengo explains that the Rastafarianism that is quite common among Oshiwambo-speaking musicians today had a root in the Struggle camps, perhaps because of Ras's association with it. However, he adds:

> But music to us did not come related to Rastafarianism. No, music came from a long time ago. Because in those refugee camps, it was just music. Revolutionary music. We all sang. Everybody sang. Even people that don't sing now, they all sang. If you tell them to sing, they will all recite revolutionary songs for you. *(Interview Shishani Vranckx)*

Hishishi Papa (Shikongeni) confirmed that some characteristics of traditional Oshiwambo music and dance were somehow preserved and exploited in exile. Music was part of everyday life, and a remedy against boredom since music was the only form of entertainment those days. Musicians such as these contributed to the wider representation of the Struggle for Independence through their music, even when they began to follow their own individual careers and styles.

Contemporary Music

The coming of independence in 1990 opened up doors to new music and opportunities for musicians in Namibia. Growing up in exile had allowed only limited career options in music due to restrictions of war, although certain musicians in these exile camps, namely Jackson Kaujeua and Ras Sheehama, became role models for aspiring musicians. Popular music from North America, South Africa and the Caribbean, as well as (traditional) music from Zimbabwe, Zambia and Nigeria – where the artists lived in exile – added to the sources of music artists absorbed before heading back to Namibia. Songs of resistance in camps included new chorus styles largely imported from South Africa, and youth began to express their spiritual as well as political ideas in songs called choruses, or *uukorasa.*

Remarkably few Namibian artists were aired on regional radio stations before independence, apart from Tate Kwela and Nanghili Nashima, as well as the lesser known Iita yaKadha, Immanuel Namulo, Kankondi kaTimo and Iimbodi yaShomwele. The field seemed wide open to emerging artists. According to Shishani Vranckx (2015), new blends and styles absorbed from worldwide popular media have soaked into the music of today. Whereas much of the traditional Aawambo music was rhythmically structured in threes (6/8), contemporary electronic urban music styles in Oshiwambo mainly use a 4/4 time. Their beats are filled with synthesizer sounds. Lyrics are often linguistically mixed with various dialects of Oshiwambo intersected with English and Afrikaans. While the urban scene follows global music trends, one cannot ignore the particular sound of the

kwaito[47] songs which have ruled the past two decades. Some of the different genres in the electronic sphere are: kwaito, hiphop, hikwa (hiphop and kwaito), kwiku (shambo and kwassa kwassa), afro-pop, house, RnB and gospel. The lyrical content in the electronic genres largely depends on the style of music, and can vary from personal life stories, to social issues, to partying, to "adult" music, to boasting, to motivational or "inspirational" music, and Christian messages in gospel music. Urban music follows a pop-music structure whereby verses are rapped or sung, and choruses include multiple voices rapping or singing the chorus together.

Indigenous music of all Namibian cultures is currently experiencing a kind of revival, with more or fewer changes depending upon the performers. So-called traditional dances are now quite commonly performed in urban areas, mainly on days when political history is recalled and Namibian culture celebrated. Urban styles of contemporary dance follow the musical genres in dance halls and clubs. Choreographed theatrical urban contemporary dance is a fast-developing genre, forging a new way forward while interacting with "roots" movements.

Specific contemporary music and musicians performing in Oshiwambo dialects are discussed in detail in Chapter 7.

[47] A genre imported from South Africa, undergoing small changes in Namibia.

2 The Work We Do: Performing Daily Lives

It is a part of human life that people have to work to survive. Whether in contemporary life or traditional, there is always work!

In Aawambo traditional life there are several performances that are not really thought of as music. To the outsider it would sound as though a song is being sung, but they are not called songs (*iiyimbo)* in Oshiwambo. They can be chants, meaning that they involve personal forms of poetry incidentally set to vocalisations (kind of melody). Or, they are made up of nonsense syllables set to a repeating melody to create a soothing atmosphere. They might be hummed (*izizimwa*) or relate to the job to be done. Therefore, despite having a category name, melody and rhythm, their status in society has more to do with work and efficacy relating to the task at hand, than to music. For this reason, they are being described separately from other songs here.

Everywhere I travelled and stayed with people in Omusati and Oshikoto regions, I was struck by the amount of daily work there is in subsistence farming. Except when I stayed with professional teachers and at a Chief's home, all the people I met were small

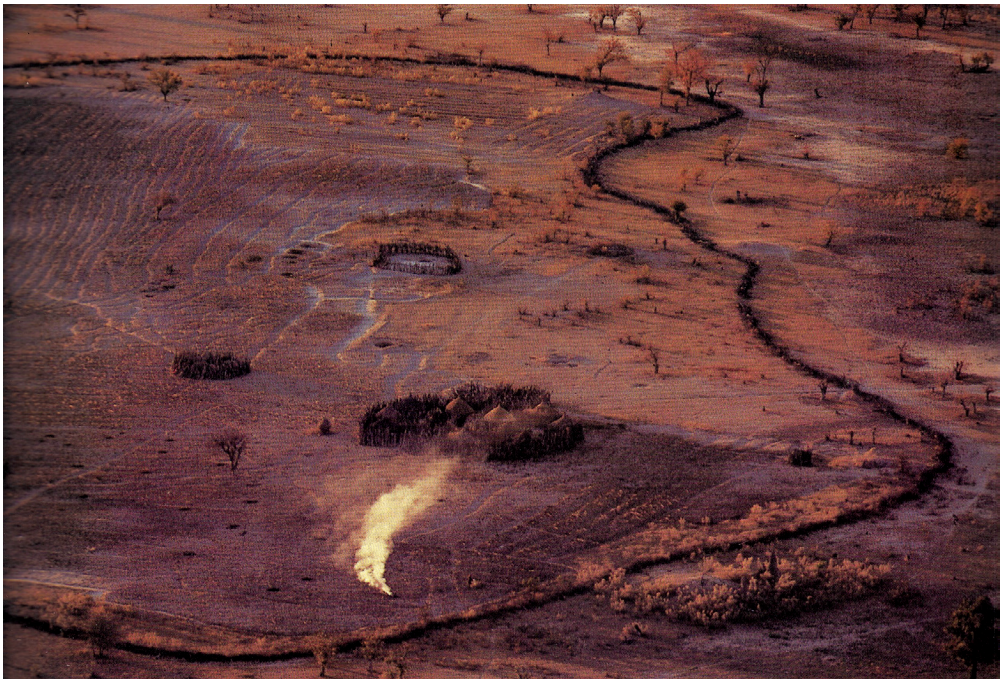

Fig. 2.1: Traditional type of homestead in landscape, seen from the air

Fig. 2.2: Friend's home near Outapi

farmers with some livestock (cattle, goats and chickens) as well as a couple of omahangu, maize and sorghum fields, also planted with ground nuts (*eefukwa)* and vegetables. The work involved in maintaining these fields, as well as the home, fell onto the shoulders of women. Within the home, children had (considerable) fixed chores before and after school, such as cooking the *oshithima* or *oshifima* (porridge), cleaning dishes and sweeping the oshoto. Similarly, in the afternoon, girls would stoke the fire under the large black pot and get the evening's oshifima and other food going. If there was a young man in the family not actively involved in studying, he would be responsible for livestock and the fetching of water. The fields were reliant on rain, not irrigation. Field work, such as tilling, hoeing and harvesting was done mostly by hand, with the community becoming involved in the big tasks.

A traditional homestead is made up of several separate rooms, some of reed, clay and grass, others of brick. Rooms and pathways are separated by curving passages between high palisades. The roundabout passage twists and turns are meant to confuse a visitor – and they do! Certain areas are public, such as the general oshoto for meals and so on. Others are strictly private, for family members only; there are also areas for food storage, poultry. Men and women have different sleeping areas and young men share quarters. Fig. 2.1 provides an aerial view of such a homestead. It is the home of one family, their property surrounded by a bush and palisade fence.

Modern homes are more likely to look like that shown in Fig. 2.2, yet the majority of people in the areas I visited continue to make use of a mixture of wooden and brick rooms. Often, the day started before sunrise for most families. Household chores were begun while my assistants and I were still comfortably ensconced in our sleeping bags, waiting for the sun to rise. The sounds of sweeping, roosters crowing and hens clucking came to our ears. Quiet voices spoke as the ubiquitous stamping of omahangu grain (*okuyungula* is to pound omahangu) began in the cool early morning. As soon as the sun rose we were out of our blankets because the heat set in rapidly, even in the early winter. By the time we were ready to show our faces, after a quick breakfast tea and cereal moistened with water, we were ready to work. We did what we could to assist around the home and tidied our sleeping area as well. Thereafter, we sat down to plan the day's interviews and research questions. In the meantime, as heat set in, the early morning activities around the homestead slowed down. Children left for school, and adults began their chores in the fields, or walked to the nearest village for provisions. Women checked the daily brew of omahangu and water and other tasks of home care and farming.

Other chores concerning food involve caring for livestock, shaking the large calabash of milk to make butter, preparing beer and other foods, tilling the soil, planting, reaping and so on. Women are mostly responsible for the care of babies. Some of these chores are the responsibility of women, others of men, and some of them are the tasks of the youth.

Fig. 2.3: Returning from the water point with cans of water

Fig. 2.4: Traditional Ngandjera skirts and beaded belts with shells

It was notable how all the images described carried sounds with them: the regular stamping sounds of the mortar and pestle accompanied by quiet rhythmic song; the swishing sounds of the broom; the livestock and whistling of young men or boys taking them to grazing; overlaid by the light voices of children laughing, calling or yelling.

Women also spent time on their personal grooming – doing their hair, tending their and the family's clothes, laundry and so on. The preparation of finery – stringing beads for necklaces, preparing ostrich egg shells for belts and metal beads to weigh down the traditional pinkish red skirts are all tasks for women.

Grain is traditionally pounded into a fine meal or flour for cooking as porridge, a staple food. In rural areas this task is performed by hand by women or girls. A large wooden pestle is partly filled with grain, and this is then pounded using a heavy wooden mortar. Alternatively, during threshing time all the grain is spread out on the threshing floor (*olupale)* and communally pounded with rhythmic movements. Where possible, more than one woman would be pounding the grain, using song and a synchronized rhythm to ease the drudgery of the task. Generally it is performed during the day (or early evening when it is cooler), but it might also form part of full moon activities, when all the women in the village or homestead are included in the performance. General everyday cooking was mostly done by young girls in the homes I stayed at. Food for special occasions such as *eluko* (naming of baby) would, however, be prepared by adult women.

While pounding and singing, one's body position is fairly upright, holding the large mortar in both hands, knees slightly bent. The young women step to a side, kicking/

brushing the grain with their feet so as to keep moving the omahangu to the centre so that it isn't scattered over the floor. They nod/bend their heads up and down rhythmically and slowly. As can be seen from the text, the soloist sings the lyric, while the group responds with a repetition of their melody. One such a song is "Pumputu", from Ondonga, collected by Aina Angombe in 1998.

Call:	*Pumputu gwanamukanda nasheya*
Response:	*Weyi yooya! Weyi yooya!*
Call:	*Pumputu oshike to nangananga?*
Response:	*Weyi yooya! Weyi yooya!*
Call:	*Em, Em, Em, Pumputu*
Response:	*Weyi yooya! Weyi yooya!*

Translation:
Pumputu of Namukanda and Sheya
Why are you pecking?

Meaning:
The women are asking pumputu, a large, turkey-sized red-beaked black bird[1] why it wants to peck at their omahangu; they want to save their food.

Here is a common omahangu recipe, as well as *ekaka,* common to Oshiwambo-speaking homes in the north, traditionally made from wild spinach to be eaten with cooked chicken or merely omahangu. *Oshifima shomahangu* is a pap or firm porridge (maize meal is smoother and cooks more quickly, but o*mahangu* is a millet grain,[2] coarser and tastier).

Ingredients:
5 cups of o*mahangu* flour
1 ½ litres of water

Bring 1 litre of water to the boil in a heavy, deep saucepan. Mix 1 cup of o*mahangu* meal in 500 ml of water in a separate bowl. Pour omahangu mixture into saucepan and stir. Reduce heat and cover pot to simmer for 5 – 10 minutes. Then add the other 4 cups of omahangu to the mixture and stir well for about 5 minutes until the mixture has thickened nicely. Cover and simmer for another 10 minutes. Stir again for about 3 minutes with a large wooden spoon. Cover once more and simmer for 15 minutes. The consistency should be firm, so that portions can be eaten by hand and dipped into sauces. Usually the porridge should pull away from the side of the saucepan. Also delicious when served with *ekaka* (spinach), *omatangala* (tripe) or *okapenda* (sardines).

Sauce: Tomato
Slice two onions finely. Gently fry in a little oil until transparent. Crush 1 clove of garlic and add to onions. Chop 4 tomatoes into rough chunks, and add to onions. Simmer for

1 Ground Hornbill, *Bocorvus leadbeateri,* a seasonal arrival in the rainy season.
2 *Pennisetum spicatum* or *Pennisetum americanum.*

about 10 minutes, stirring occasionally. Add salt and pepper to taste, and half a teaspoon of coriander. You might want to add half a chopped chilli (optional). Simmer for another few minutes until mixture is soft but still chunky. This can be placed on the side of the grid on the fire – not too hot.

Ekaka (Oshindonga) or *evanda* (Oshikwanyama)[3]

Ingredients:
300 gr fresh large leafed spinach
1 onion
1 tomato (optional)
Pinch of salt
1 tbsp cooking oil or odjove
1 T butter
1 T flour
1 c water

Method:
Chop or tear washed spinach into pieces and add to cold salted water. Bring to boil. In a separate saucepan, gently fry finely chopped onion in oil until translucent. Add to spinach. Simmer gently until the spinach has wilted and cook until tender (about 30 minutes). Moisten flour in a little cold water and add with butter to mixture. Stir until sauce has thickened.

Oondjambi

Oondjambi (*ondjabi* in Kwanyama) are general working songs. In Ongandjera some of these songs – for hoeing the fields – were described as *oshikungukungu.* They consist of a leader's call followed by the chorus response. These songs may be performed during any field work such as cultivating, harvesting (*okuyela)*, planting, pounding maize or millet, alone or when helping or being assisted by others in the field. Songs specific to harvesting are called *oshipale,* because the winnowing takes place at oshipale. People sing various songs while working to encourage themselves and others in the task. It seems that these were not really a repertoire of specific songs, but that the circumstance of performing while working made them oondjambi. Therefore, almost any suitable inspiring rhythmic song could be sung as long as it was "inspiring". When communities worked together in the fields in the past, they would get together socially afterwards and enjoy food and drink supplied by the host when his field was done. These days mechanisation has made this practice obsolete in many areas except in those that are more remote. Here is an example of an ondjambi, working song, collected by Idda Shivolo, 1994, in Oshamuhenye, Ohangwena.

[3] With thanks to Eli Hausiku and Kyllikki Nampala for their ekaka and tomato sauce recipes

Omutoloki:	*Kengendjo kengendjo*	*Ayehe:*	*Yooye kengendjo*
	Itaveleni mokule		” ”
	Nando hamokulekule		” ”
	Ndi mu lombwele oitewo		” ”
	Yi li kondungu yelaka		” ”
	Yi li yomayego		” ”
	Oilonga kayi lya muntu		” ”
	Ngeno yalya Kandjabanga		” ”
	Eli awike megumbo		” ”
	Eli nokaana nombwa		” ”
	Take mu tekele omeya		” ”
	Take mu tsile uusila		” ”

Translation: Kengendjo means bells, bells
Reply me loud (sic)
Although not so very loudly
I want to tell you poems
Which are on the tip of the tongue
Which is under the teeth
(last verse) People cannot die from work
Perhaps Kandjabanga died because of work
Who used to stay alone in the house
Who used to stay with the child and the dog
The child usually fetches water for him from the wells
And pounds omahangu for flour.

Omapitifo – Birthing and Naming Songs

According to Amukweya, when a baby is born the midwife (*omuvalithi* or *omutooli)* picks up the infant, ululates or whistles and then gives a name. If the infant's father is there, he also gives a name on the day of birth. But if he is not there, he sends someone with a name, or he sends a letter if he is working in Tsumeb, for example. The baby stays indoors for one to two weeks (previously 3 – 4 weeks according to Embula) until the umbilical cord has dried, and then the mother or both parents call the godparents, one from each side of the family, for epiitho. The *ooshenkadhi* (godfather from the father's side) brings the new mother out of the room. He cuts the baby's hair for the first time.

At epiitho the baby receives an *onyoka* (necklace) called *ondiu,* made from ostrich eggshell, which the godfather ties around the baby's neck. In addition, the baby receives a metal bangle for the wrist or ankle.

Once all the necessary cleansing rituals have been performed, the baby is brought outside for the first time. He/she is then lifted to the sky by the godfather, and formally introduced and named to the community and to the ancestral spirits (*aathithi)*. Then the

godparents either brew or bring traditional homemade beer called *oshuupagela* which is transported in an *oshimbudju,* which is a large calabash. Sheepo tells me that a person from the father's side, that is the godfather, carries out oshuupagela and gives the baby a belt made of cow's leather, called *etapakano.* This is ceremonially wrapped around the infant, one piece over each shoulder, and then around the waist. This leads to a celebration where there is dancing and some feasting (if parents can afford it). People can perform *oshike shetu eta,* literally "what are we doing here?" Sheepo, Saarti and Amukweyo all confirmed this singing, but Embula said there were no special songs for epiitho. The new father shouts out a name (*oshiguma)* for the new baby. The *oshike shetu eta* songs are sung by men and women at epiitho in front of ondjugo at oshoto, with clapping, dance, kicking motions, and without instruments. Women perform the call with repeated response songs, with dance, stamping feet and clapping hands. One re-enactment I saw in Ongandjera included a woman going down on her knees while holding her back as though it ached. Other women did motions while holding a hand in the small of their backs. At the time I didn't notice, but later wondered whether this showed something about labour preceding a baby's birth?

Men in Uukwaluudhi might play omupembe on this occasion, and here the baby's name is given prior to epiitho by the maternal grandmother. The father's side gives a name at a later stage. Epiitho involves a ceremonial haircut for the infant. After another month the mother takes the baby to visit the godfather. There the little one is rubbed with olukwe (butter fat), and the family celebrate once more.

Because of the spiritual overtones of this celebration, it is currently not in favour among Christian people.

In the past, twins (*epasha* or *epaha)* were seen as bringers of bad luck in northern parts. So when people realise that there are two, they send for the onganga. The room (hut) where the mother has given birth needs to be ceremonially cleansed of potential evil spirits. On the day when they are first taken outside, called e*pasha oli li moshimeno* or *epaha tali sindulwa,* the onganga ceremonially cleanses the hut and area around the inside of the hut by splashing herb-containing water *(okuyoga epasha).* After this, the people who wish to greet the new mother need to wash with water from a clay pot with a wide mouth, called an *okayo.* The okayo is filled with *iihidhi,* special herbs and water. This naturally helps to prevent illness from entering the room.

During the first month after the twins' birth, they have to remain indoors (*epasha tali di mo*). When the time arrives for epiitho, the onganga is called again to cleanse the room and bring the babies out, shouting "*Pasha lyetu, pasha lyetu*!" meaning "our twins". The father shouts out the names of the twins. Sometimes rope-like strips of omu-

sati bark (*omuhuya)*, which are normally used to tie palisades, are given to parents, who take the wettish omuhuya strips and chase each other around, trying to beat one another. If they manage, all the onlookers ululate! Afterwards everyone can celebrate. A special food is prepared, a mix of beans, chicken or beef is cooked in a stew *(inamumwe)* along with *ekaka* (spinach) and omalovu after the naming of twins, and *oudano nepasha* (dance-play for twins) is performed.

In Ombalanhu, Maria Mbwadha said that they sing *etanda* at *epitifo,* as the name-giving ceremony is called there. The mother stays unseen at okahahala for a month, while somebody from outside brings her food. Again there is the idea of twins as something special, because, as Mbwadha said, the mother breaks oshikola (calabash) on a special cow's horns. But then – others who have had twins, chase her around trying to beat her with the omusati bark, saying: "Who said you could have twins like us?" Thereafter people celebrate sing and dance, most often with ouvano. The mother goes around and splashes water on people. In this area Mbwadha said that people are happy about twins, and they sing etanda anytime when they see the twins until they are quite big. However, apparently one twin often dies early or, if both survive, one parent often dies. So it appears that some kind of dread surrounds the event of twins. (*Elongo* is the name for triplets.)

Soothing songs exist in all the areas, to put a baby to sleep or give comfort when restless. Although mainly performed by women, men can also sing a soothing song, like that below. It is called "Uulele yaNamutenya", and tells about the child's background and heritage. It mimics the crying of the child in the second two bars. The chromatic little pattern is repeated in a gliding tone (glissando) and is sung like an infant's cry. The pattern I transcribed below is merely an approximation of the model of the song, because it can be varied in many ways, and the rhythmic pattern changes according to the text. The song would be sung until the desired effect (baby asleep) has been achieved. The singer of this song was Joshua Shaningwa Oshitayi of Ondangwa.

With a repetitious short melody and a trancelike rhythm in twos – for the typical two way soothing movement – these songs can be hummed, or sung with a text to praise the infant or the family.

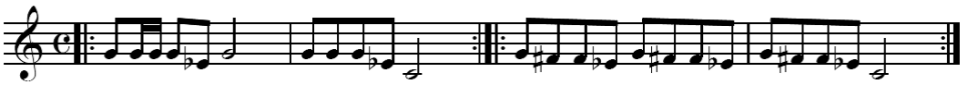

Fig. 2.5: Basic melody of a soothing song "Ulele ya Namutenya"

Ondjupa

Ondjupa (Kwaluudhi) are work songs for men (or women?) when they are shaking a large calabash of milk to thicken it for butterfat. The calabash is strung up and hangs from a wooden rafter. It is then pushed to and fro in a push-pull action by two men opposite one another, or in other cases by one person alone. People generally prefer to work together. This action gives the name to the type of song, namely *eshiko d'ondjupa.* To perform the action is *okushika ondjupa.*[4] At traditional weddings for women, young male 'grooms' also shake ondjupa to prepare the butterfat for the bride (see Fig. 2.6). The songs can apparently be sung by a single man or two, with men taking turns to sing. Ondjupa are sung for *omashiini eengombe* (milk) and never for something like beer. I was told of these work songs for men by Tjaningwe, Hango and Shau, three elderly men in Tsandi, Uukwaluudhi at the king's home and Council area. Seemingly pleased with being reminded of the different song types, they entertained with several short snippets of song and movements and discussion. The ondjupa sung in their thin, wavering voices, were tempered by both age and emotion. I must admit that I never saw the actual work performed since all the men at every home that I stayed were involved in other kinds of work.

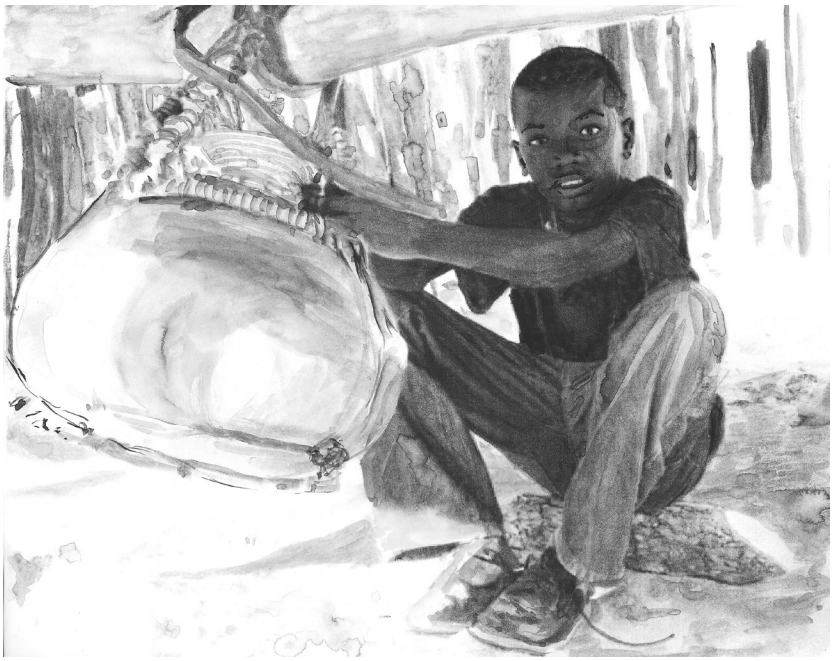

Fig. 2.6: Ondjupa shaking by young boy, in this case as 'groom' to an olufuko 'bride'

[4] Okushika means to shake.

Uusita – Herding

When herders (*uusita)* walk with their cattle, they often chant to their cattle as they go. Such a chant is thus called *omusita* (uusita is the plural). The sound of a man singing omusita is like a descending call or wail. An arrhythmic personal expression, encouraging cattle to move, but also expressing the difficulties of herding. In many ways, this is similar to a kind of ongovela (see pp. 44–51).

Okwiitanga – Praise Chants

It seemed that everyone had a chant for praising something or someone in the Oshiwambo-speaking regions. Such praise chants, I was told by meekulu Monica Abisai and her husband tatekulu Johannes Andjaba, are mainly meant to praise one's own lineage, and can be performed by men and women.

We were sitting in the late afternoon shade of their home in Ombalanhu, a little distance south of Outapi. Kuku Monica received us warmly and was, of course, especially happy to see Hertha, their granddaughter. Mr Andjaba was more suspicious about receiving a white person in their home, but seemed to thaw later as the conversation progressed. They treated us to tea and biscuits, which were very welcome after a long hot drive all day. We chatted while the thunder clouds began to build up, and chickens scurried around to find their evening roosting places. Our thoughts turned to the possibility of late rain (it was May). Mr Andjaba told us that in the past when one wanted to call the rain, people would go with a cow – black with no spots or colour – to the onganga. The cow would serve as payment for the onganga to perform certain rituals. When people returned to their homes the rain would come and they would sing praise chants for the rain.

Kuku Abisai told us about her experience of olufuko and the importance of the ceremony as a transition rite transforming from someone considered a youth to becoming a woman. She performed okwiitanga for us, and described the chants as being about oneself, or your country, your cattle, even the rain. Here is her personal chant's text, showing her admirable familial heritage:

Ame Nangolo nda feenani
Va ngonga naShaanya
Eenani va tsa eengolo
ShaNaita esiku limwe
Va teelela omatemba
Manga Emwili avi ya
Ndee Namwene ta panda
Ame Hitila waNaitembu

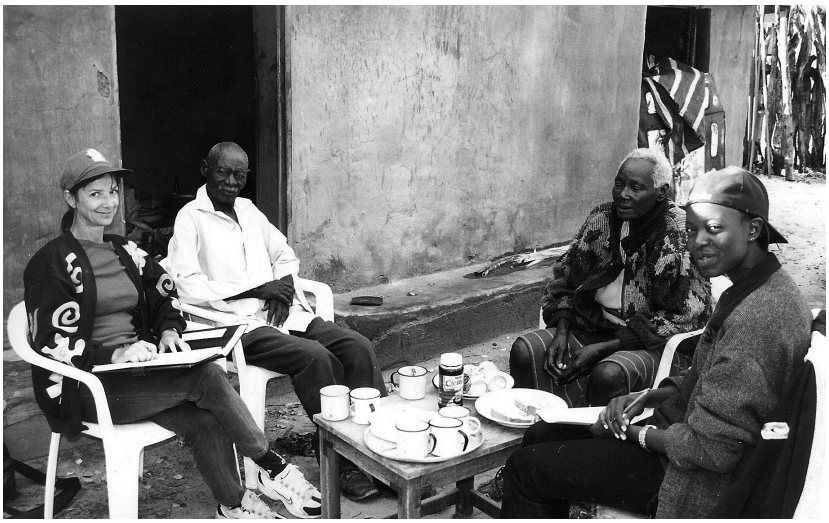

Fig. 2.7: Late afternoon tea at the Andjaba's homestead (2000)

Shilumbu waNautana
Wa Hapo Hirmanen
Tyeni Pata wakashapi
Oshilumbu sha teya olange netenda
Nomamanya Shaumbile
Nauta wa tulwa omushasha
Nandebo mo izimawe
Ya pika otusilala
Molyomakaya waweli
Momaandaha wakashapi
Momambo (mwambo?) waJason
Motundi yombiibeli
Kaleke musa waAmutenya
Kakonda mumvo waAileka
Moshiwalongo waNakwenye
Mokole waMaritina
Nomunhu to li kundita
Nye inamu li holeka Endele lyokomutanu
Oshilumbu shokonoovola
Shopongulu kaali na.

Since the words in this are partly symbolic, and tell of an individual's story, it has not been fully translated here.

Although this description of "non-music" songs and chants does not cover every time and place that songs of a kind are made and performed, it serves to show how integral a part of life singing is in Aawambo culture.

3 Praise and Endurance: What Men Value

(with Ismael Sam)

From the discussion in Chapter 1, the musical world of Oshiwambo-speaking people can be seen to show a clear differentiation between men's and women's music. This could be the outcome of traditional labour divisions between genders. Nowadays, where women have entered the labour market in many areas previously reserved for men, one could probably expect these divisions to mean less. But in the rural areas of Namibia tasks are, by and large, still performed according to gender customs – men tend the stock animals and women tend the fields and home. However, this must not be seen as a firm categorization of music, since in the main seasonal category of music, for example, men and women might both perform, but separately. One could speculate on causes for the apparent separation – did the migration caused by the forced labour system contribute to different modes of performance? Are there other deeper causes? Drum-playing is generally a female task in musical entertainment, but remains the sphere of male drummers in value-laden rituals like efundula. Most other musical instruments are the domain of men, except for those related to the work of namunganga or oonamunganga, and young women on their way to olufuko. Since the structure and performance of male and female music demonstrate distinctive qualities they are discussed separately in the following two chapters. This chapter will focus on the many different categories of men's music, one in particular – ongovela.

If I were to risk a broad statement about men's music in this part of Namibia, it would be that the custom is for men to sing and play for the same recreational purposes as do women during full moon play, and during important ceremonies including the women's traditional wedding ceremony. Unique to men, however, are songs performed when herding animals, when praising their cattle, when they are lonely or in suffering, and for self-delectation, in other words, to entertain oneself. This last category often involves musical instruments such as lamellophones (*okashandja)* and the musical bow (*okambulumbumbwa)*.[1] Several of the men's categories of song have evolved out of the transitions of youth to manhood, although not with as large a display as women's transitions in the past century or so. Men's transitions have over time become linked to economic welfare. Thus, the fetching of salt from the Etosha northern pans was not only a

[1] In general, in times past women were not encouraged to play musical instruments. But when men left the area for long periods during their labour contracts, women began playing the drums (except at efundula).

test of endurance and strength, but the salt was a valuable trade commodity. While this practice has become uncommon in contemporary society, the memories of *ekango* lie shallow in the memories of the elderly Oshindonga-speaking people. Kwanyama men, on the other hand, underwent similar tests in going to the mining sites to dig out iron ore which they could trade. Again, this task was underwritten by many customs that marked the returnees as men. The categories below that describe specific repertoires of music are those that have emerged from people who are seen locally as experts in this kind knowledge.

Loneliness Music

In the past, young men went to collect salt in the Etosha pans in May or June as part of their induction into society as a man. They made three journeys, each filled with various rituals,[2] and they were usually accompanied by a male namunganga (or *ontsakala* host) who would know where to go, and would ritually "open" the site at the pan. In Ondonga he was usually from the *Aakwaniilya* (grain) clan. The first journey was the ontsakala journey, to dig up and fetch the ontsakala roots. This small plant grows seasonally at the edges of the pan in specific places. It is bitter but aromatic. The second journey, about two weeks later, was *ondhilu,* to fetch a small amount of salt, solely for the royal consumption. This was also when they sang *ekandjo* songs. The third journey was the big *ondhilu* which was freer and more salt was removed. Men sang ekandjo songs (see below). After this, the season was open until the host of the salt pan closed it again.

On the first journey the men would bring offerings of grain and tobacco to appease the spirits of the pan. They were sure to offer ontsakala root and salt to the spirits of the forefathers – all to ensure that the salt with which they were returning did not bring bad luck to the kingdom. After they dug up ontsakala roots, they would sing ontsakala songs. Fetching salt was an extremely challenging trek, as the distances were long and the heat extreme. From Ondonga men would travel about 65 km. to the part of the Etosha Pan that they "mined", while the salt valley of Uukwambi was about 150 km south of the old Ovamboland border.[3] On their return these men would carry heavy containers/bags of salt with which to trade. Since the area around Etosha has long since been heavily populated by wild animals, the trek was dangerous and they were apparently not permitted to take weapons. During the second and third journeys the young men would sing to give one another courage and express sympathy for their burdens.

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2 See M. Hiltonen, 1993, pp. 91–103 for a detailed description and analysis of this fascinating, yet functional practice.

3 Hiltonen, 1993, p. 91.

Sitting in the shady space of the UuKwaluudhi Traditional Council meeting room, a gentle breeze was blowing through the palisades helping to cool us off in the heat of northern Namibia. I marvelled at the number of people attending a meeting and noted with surprise that a large number of women were also in the council. Asking about songs, several people moved nearer to hear what was being said. The elderly men were more than willing to chat as they recalled songs they had sung in their youth. Johannes Niingo, one of the Kwaluudhi councillors to whom I spoke in 1999, called the salt fetching songs *uuhwi* (meaning you go somewhere, you get something, riches). The songs, he said, speak of pain, suffering, but also pride. In Uukwambi and Ondonga I was told they are called *iiyimbo yokekango* referring to the salt carrying. In Ombalanhu Tate Andjaba said *oupongo* is the term, referring to the pain suffered, and in Ondonga one could sing *iiymbo yuupongo* (songs of loneliness, wanderer's songs). Such songs were sung in the time when men walked to Tsumeb or travelled by bus to other mines in the south as labourers. According to Ootatekulu Johannes Niingo, Willibard Hango, and Stephanus Shau to whom I spoke at King Taapopi 's royal homestead in Tsandi, men would sing these songs in some anticipation – often accompanied by *okambulumbumbwa* – on their return. They would then be feeling proud to have earned something.

Fig. 3.1: Shilengifa Naimbudu

These somewhat mournful sounding songs are responsorial, with a starter solo singer *(ontangi* or *onkulungu)* who creates his own lyrics, followed by a responsorial chorus (*aayamukuli)*. These songs can be sung when gathering and drinking, probably as men miss their homes or earlier times. Young men would learn these songs from their fathers.

Loneliness songs in Ombalanhu are often played on the *uuta* (hunting bow) but *okambulumbumbwa* is also used. A small stick is always used to strike the string while the finger positions on the string create partial overtones that make up the melodic patterns of this gentle music. Bows are usually played while seated, therefore without dancing.

Shilengifa Naimbudu is a local master of *oiyimbo yokambulumbumbwa*. He is a self-taught musician and constructs his own instruments. He likes to wear traditional dress

when performing (see Fig. 3.1). Most of his songs tell stories about people and life in times past. He learnt his craft by observing and imitating elders' play when he was a child. Along with his warm voice, there are the entrancing sounds of the harmonic overtones of the bow, set in the rhythmic pattern of the string stick, and the additional overtones created by opening and closing the calabash resonator on his chest.[4] In recent times he has performed in interesting collaborations with Finnish musicians and other Namibians.

In the past the Kwanyama men were known for their iron industry,[5] products of which they traded further south. The most important products were iron hoes, but arrow blades and beads were produced as well. Before setting off to the iron mines (*oshimanya)*, people would gather. The iron master was the first to leave for the forest. He "opened" the forest and nobody else was allowed to enter before he returned. The journey of the smiths took about 8 – 10 days and required preparation – grinding millet, brewing the *omalovu* (omahangu drink) and chopping down *omusati* (mopani) trees for magic wood. The master drew chalk lines on the faces and foreheads of the smiths. There were ritual songs sung at this time, with a text saying "the basket turned over, turned over on the salt pan".[6] Fresh firewood would be spread out on the threshing area and people would sing. A light meal would be eaten.

Later on, after sunset, the firewood would be lit and people gathered. The *ontaku* (fresh flour and water brew) was brought to the glow of the fire, and afterwards a goblet of the brew was thrown on the fire to appease the spirits of the forefathers. This vessel was marked with chalk, as it was of special value. People then gathered around the fire and men would sing about the mine while women ululated and shouted with joy.

On the night before their departure, it was expected of the master to sleep with his first wife. She would remain at home while he took a concubine with him on the journey. Then the procession set off, with the bearer of the bellows in front and the master bringing up the tail end along with four young cows (first born) and a steer. Selection of the best animals for oshimanya was important as they would be milked there for the period. In the past oshimanya took place from August to November and was usually situated in southern Angola.

Oshimanya was filled with taboos, all of which indicate the values important to the people at the time, and therefore important to impart to young men. These included not

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4 He recorded a CD for ELCIN in 2007. Contact ELCIN offices for more information. Information sourced from CD insert.

5 See Herbert, no date, and especially M. Hiltunen, 1993, pp. 60 – 72 for extensive descriptions. Loeb, 1955, also discusses "magic" practices of Aakwanyama.

6 Hiltunen, 1993, p. 61

being allowed to scold, fight using objects, or play without permission, and obeying all orders, among others.[7]

Hope Music

This kind of music does not include dance or instruments. It is sung by men when hunting or looking for lost livestock. It is a form of ongovela. By singing these songs, they express the wish that they will be successful in their search. Youths are normally the herders and they are considered responsible for the safety of the animals. They sing these song-chants as they walk, whistling so the cattle will hear.

Travelling Music

Ondundwiilandjimbo (in Oshimbalanhu) refers to music created when travelling long distances, but if one person is travelling alone, it more often becomes loneliness music. Such travelling songs can be sung while taking cattle to the post. But when travelling in groups, the songs would remain travel songs, which involve singing, and whistling. When there are several people the songs would be responsorial with a starter singer and the group responding with a repeated phrase. Sometimes when travelling, people even sing different songs at the same time. In the past when migrant workers walked home from the mines they would sing these songs. Similar to the men fetching salt, the miners walked long distances, e.g. from Tsumeb through the Etosha Park (before it was fenced) to find a direct route home. During this terrifying journey, more than one man lost his life to the lions. In such circumstances the singing must have helped to keep up their spirits.

Religious Music

Men as well as women are active in *ondjimbo yopambepo* (religious music). It includes the specific church's liturgy, hymns and choral music, as well as youth choruses' music (*okakorasa)*. Most of these hymns (e.g. those found in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Namibia 's *Ehangano)* are sung in four-part harmonies that are strongly reminiscent of European harmony, but often adapted to follow in intervals of thirds or sixths.[8] What I find noteworthy, however, is the musical role of men in weddings nowadays. On the eve of a wedding I attended, the men sat in one area and sang hymns from their hymnals by

[7] Hiltunen, 1993, p. 62

[8] See S. Löytty, 2012, for extensive discussion.

Fig. 3.2: Omupembe leap

candlelight throughout the night, until about 4 am. Women, in the meantime, sang traditional songs and moved around the entire homestead singing and dancing (see Chapter 4, pp. 78–83). Similarly, during the procession from the church after the ceremony, there was this split between men singing hymns in a very restrained and dignified manner, and women blowing whistles, dancing, ululating and singing exuberantly. The reasons for this custom aren't entirely clear. Could it be that men became more familiar with religious church music as a result of migrant work periods? Yet women knew the church songs during the wedding ceremony as well as the men. An interesting aspect to follow up.

Recreational Play

Young men in particular, show off their energy and spirit during full moon events and at other gatherings. *Omupembe* is one such play and is most often encountered in Ombalanhu (also called *ombwiku)*, Oshikwaluudhi and Ongandjera, although similar play is found under other names in Uukwambi (*omakandja)* and Ondonga (*engholo)*.

For this dance-play the youths stand in a line, clapping a slow beat, their shoulders right up against each other. The person who starts the play moves forward about two me-

ters and performs a short dance, hunched fairly low as he moves forward. He turns and begins his return, while the next player enters the open area facing the first. He meets the first and jumps over his head at the very moment when the first straightens up. The latter passes underneath the open legs of the jumper, who then performs his dance on landing. This is repeated with the next and next until everyone has taken a turn. In omupembe the forward moving steps are light across the ground, with a gliding character on the ball of the foot, punctuated by vertical hops off one foot about 30 cm off the ground, and high leaps with feet about one metre or more off the ground executed almost without any preparatory plié bend, landing on one foot in a continuous motion forward.

The music is sung in chorus, without a lead singer and the group can, while singing, create typical movements, jumping and lifting one leg off the ground. In Ombalanhu the participants might wear the traditional dress consisting of skirt-like lower parts which are painted red and no shirt.

Omupembe is an exciting exhibition as each young man is challenged to leap as high as possible. It is typical of the broader African value of ephebism in youthful dances, meaning high energy and challenge to keep on.

Marula Celebrations

When the fruit of the marula tree ripens, the fruit is happily gathered by people up north. It is good and nutritious to eat fresh, the juice is extracted and drunk, and some of the fruit is processed and distilled into an alcoholic beverage. This seasonal repertoire is marked by several events for the marula processing. There are different songs for this, but in all the regions, men listed their omagongo (marula) songs as important. Men (and sometimes women) sit around the large ceramic container in which the liquor is kept. They take sips in turns using the ladle. Songs – *oshiimbo shomagongo* – are sung in praise of the fruit of the tree and its gifts to the people, usually at the festival for the marula drinks, *oshipe shomaongo*).

Songs for Kings

Since all the Aawambo kings described in history to date are men, they are being included in this chapter. In present times it might, of course, be possible for a woman to become the queen or chief of an area and tribal council.

Songs about the kings are specific to a particular ruler and can contain many references to that king's name. These songs served a socio-political purpose, in describing the

quality of a king's rule and how he treats his people. Most often the songs give praise to their king, but if he is not considered to be a good ruler, songs may conceal warnings about his behaviour and on various political issues. In Namibia these songs have over time provided a good historical record of the various kings.

Here is a Kwanyama example, collected by Idda Shivolo, 1994, from Selma Enkono of Okahenge:

Omutoloki: *Waiyo yo yoyoyo (2x)*
Fye ovatumwa vohamba
Fye ovatumwa vomutoni
Twa tumwa tuha kale ko
Fye ovatumwa vaMandume
Ovamati vaKayala
Otwe yile tu uhaleni
Paife ohatu ka shuna
Fye otwa tekulwa kohamba
Otwa tekulwa nongola
Otwa lelwa noshokoto
I ku lombwele shiveli
Otatekulu Mandume
Diinina outa woye
Oindele kayi ku hole
Ove ku ningil-ondumbo
Ove ku ningil-ondumbo
Shaashi u li moshilongo
ShaHaimbili xokulu

Ayehe: *Waiyo yo yoyo*
(repeated response)

Translation: We are the message of the king
We are the servant *(sic)* of the king
We were sent not to stay for long
[Because we will be challenged]
We are the people of Mandume
Boys of Kayala
We came to spend a day with you
We were reared by the king
Reared with the whip
Brought up with oshoto
I am telling you my friend
Honourable Mandume
Hold your bow very carefully
Because the whites do not like you
They are jealous because you are in (your own) country
They are jealous of you
Because you are in your uncle's country
Haimbili you grandfather.

Interpretation: This song describes a warning brought to the Kwanyama king Mandume Ndemufayo about his political foes, the British colonial forces in 1915. He is warned that they "are jealous" of his country, implying that they resented his power in a time when the British were trying to impose their own power hierarchy on the people of the territory. Reference to his uncle Haimbili gives an indication of his hereditary royal position and at the same time shows that the inheritance is passed on through the matrilineal line, uncle being his mother's brother. Mandume died in 1917 at his homestead in Oihole and conflicting reports still hold sway.[9] Many Ovakwanyama maintain that he committed suicide rather than give in to the military forces sent to capture or kill him. The British report claims that they killed him. Either way, it appears that the British then decapitated him and transported the head to their "Ovamboland Campaign Memorial" in Windhoek. The Kwanyama people, however, reinstated his legacy as king by reburying his body in the customary royal manner, wrapped in a black bovine hide.

Ongovela

Ismael Sam writes:

> It is a common customary law that gender plays a major role in African traditional community practices. There are certain activities exclusive to men and others only to women. Women spend most of their time together and share their daily responsibilities and activities. So do the men spend their time together sharing skills and transferring the knowledge to one another. Both genders know their daily responsibilities as clearly as the sun rises early in the morning and sets during the night. However, what would happen if a particular family is not able to follow these customs as a result of a natural disadvantage and cannot comply with the daily laws in terms of gender responsibilities? Would the community compromise the laws or what would their reaction be?

Every community has a way of expressing themselves through different methods of performing arts. The Aawambo male communities express themselves musically during their social gatherings and even when they are alone. One such form of musical expression, the largest category, is *ongovela.* The term ongovela is broad, and the definition might differ from community to community. It should in most cases not be confused with *ongowela,* which is the Oshindonga version of ongovela, but is also associated with the general context of "church melody". [10] The term ongovela does not simply define one type of musical form. Ongovela is often described by men as a medium of instruction and a way of communicating with their cattle.

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[9] See M. Timm in Hartmann, et al., 1998, pp. 145–150.

[10] According to Löytty, 2012, with whom I had many discussions about the way the term is used.

The song and performance represents the voice of an individual singer and the voice of the community. Communities use this platform to create music, teach, inform, warn or praise themselves, praise animals, identify their animals and express personal life experiences through these songs.

Ongovela might be described as a large generic category of praise chants or songs relating to diverse repertoires[11] among the Oshiwambo-speaking community. In Oukwanyama the two main categories are:

- ongovela yeengombe dometambo when cattle are moved from home base in okwenye season (around June) and return around February in okulombo season;
- ongovela yeengombe ta di dana (prayer chant for cattle), sung at the cattle competitions.

In the period from June to October, the young men remain with their cattle in places of good grazing. Before the men depart, the wives (of those who are married) revert to their traditional clothing and omwiya. They prepare cooked flour of omahangu with a spinach sauce for the men and everyone retires early. Men chant a parting ongovela for the road. Under normal circumstances two or three men from each home accompany the family's animals and they normally join up with others.

A cattle competition is called by the chief of the area, demanding a round-up of all the animals. The competition takes place at his oluvanda (open meeting area) situated next to the kraal. The cattle and their herders and owners sleep there and eat communally – again the omahangu and ekaka. Ongovela is sung, and on this occasion women and girls too may sing and play uudhano at olupale for the entire night. After the competition the chief arranges for the herders to eat at his home – again omahangu porridge with ekaka with butter and meat. On the morning of the competition the animals are left to graze (*oshikuiifa*) and fill themselves. That afternoon the animals return to the kraal. At the right time, men enter from the kraal into the oluvanda for the competition proper, where they try to outdo one another in chanting praises for their animals in particular, whilst performing movements with this. At the

Fig. 3.3: Men singing ongovela at the home of Tatekulu Andreas Shikulu, Windhoek (2000, video shot)

[11] A repertoire is a collection of songs or music of a certain type.

feast afterwards, men can perform *onkandeka* and *eenghama* (with singing and clapping), while the youth can play *uudhano waakadhona*. After the completion of the competition, herders and cattle return to their homes.

The above two categories have sub-categories (repertoires), as described below, determined by the specific event, for example herding, milking, praising, cultivating, harvesting, wedding and birth ceremonies.

Ismael continues:

> The Aawambo community believes in the ideology of Umuntu Ngumundu ngabantu. They also believe in and obey the customary laws. However, there is a certain amount of flexibility. Should there be a problem, family members can ask other family members to help them with somebody to assist them with daily activities. If you only have daughters and they are willing to take care of the cattle, they can do that. The law does not prohibit it. However, the girls will always be guarded by experienced cattle herder boys who will assist and train them. On the annual cattle trek, when they pass through the different villages, the boys will introduce the girls as they pass through, explaining that this family does not have boys to do the work. This was the case with the personal account below, which is interesting because it tells the story of this important category of men's song from the point of view of a girl.

Herder's ongovela and the story of Bertha Mundilo:

Bertha was born in 1991 at Omadano Village in the Ohangwena Region, Omundaungilo constituency. She grew up with her parents in the eastern part of Okongo in Ongudi. Her father passed away in 1999 and Bertha was taken by her uncle to herd cattle along with his two daughters. This was mainly because they had no sons, only female children. Bertha tells it in her own words:

> Therefore we had to herd the cattle. I started looking after the cattle at 8 years and my uncle taught us how to sing ongovela. He informed us that it is important to know how to sing ongovela for you to be able to communicate with the animals. You must have a way of singing to the animals as well as communicate with community if you are cattle herder.
>
> **The first step is when you enter the kraal**
>
> When you enter the kraal you must go first to the right side of the kraal and start whistling a melody. It must sound always the same. This melody is the melody you use to communicate with the cattle to wake them up. After they have woken up (become alert) you go straight to the bull in the kraal and start to praise him. As you praise him, the bull will bellow and stretch himself as you praise him. This means that he reacts according to your praise song. After that you go to the cows and start milking them. When you are about to finish milking the cows, one of the herders might open the gate of the calf kraal for the calves to enter into the kraal of the cows. Then we start singing the song.

Song 1: *Kumeidilenge nguluvoyo, kumeidileinge nguluvi non-yanya*

Meaning of the song: Who allowed the calves to enter in the kraal? They are stubborn.

After the song we leave the kraal and go to the olupale, the place where we are going to get our breakfast and prepare for the long journey. We take the bag (omutenge) with a calabash and milking bucket. After the breakfast we set out on the long journey.

Fig. 3.4: Bertha Mundilo

The owner of the cattle will come and make sure whether all the cattle are there and then open the gate of kraal. In our case, the cattle were not allowed to go in the direction of Oluvanda. If they did cross the Oluvanda there was no serious damage, but it is a customary law. We take the omutengi (bag) and follow the cattle, always walking on the right side of the cattle.

As cattle herders we commit ourselves to go as far as possible for grazing. The further you go, the better grazing you get for your animals. Therefore the cattle herders motivate themselves by singing ongovela songs in order to reach their goals and become better cattle herders. We know we will be rewarded for that one day.

Approaching the next cattle post

As we are taking out the cattle or are about to reach the next post, we start singing the song "Eliloo longolo mom'timo". The reason for singing this song is to inform the people from where you are coming from and where you are going and whether they see the cattle you are with as evidence."

Song 2: *Eliloo longolo mom'timo.*
Eliloo longolo mom'timo (x2) komesho kotwouka oku no-papa wanangalo ongali (x1)
Ohai kwandjangele nelila, kondjo nomandakani yamanya (x2)
E'mbulutwo mwe li mwene twe ya nalo (x2)
Ohai kwandjangele nelila, kondjo nomandakani yam'londo

Meaning of the song:
The way is back there and I'm struggling with the trips of *emanya*.[12]
Did you see the cattle we came with?
Did you see our bulls?

When the community hears this song from a distance they know that the cattle herders are coming and they know where they are going, through the lyrics of the song. For us it was very difficult at some villages. Some of the community members do not encourage the notion of girls being cattle herders. However, when you reach the village or the post the community members might sometimes ask you to praise the cattle for them. Sometimes they sing the ongovela songs with you.

[12] Emanya is stone, here referring to a stony, rocky way.

Challenges in the journey

During the journey as cattle herders you are faced with many challenges. Sometimes you come to a scene where the blood of the wild animal [kill] is visible on the ground. And the cattle become panicked because they smell the blood and they don't want to continue with the journey. Then we make a fire and take the ash and put it where the blood is. Then the smell of blood disappears and you can continue.

Another challenge one might experience is that you go to a certain post hoping there is enough grass, when you reach the post you find that the whole area has burned and there is no grass! Then you must move to another post. The cattle go hungry. On return from the field your cattle might not look as fat as other cattle.

The song below was based on when the herder came to the cattle post and the forest was put on fire. The herders blamed the San community with whom they share the forest for burning it.

Song 3
Kwanekamba ndeliyalee-tate
Kwanekamba ndeliyalee tate Laxwikapwe kango letu nekango lapyapo kavena –shi tavali,talenya –afita valyonyama-nyamaaaa (x2)
Om`ndo mhedi shiluwe shange tate ekango lapyapyo kavenasi tavali,talenga-afita valyo nyama nyamaaohh

Meaning of the song:
Our father, whole forest has been burned by bushman people
and there is nothing left for our cattle for grazing,
and look, the missionaries might come
and they might need meat.

Commanding the cattle for a little rest.

When you are done with the daily duties and come to rest, you command the cattle by communicating with them. You praise them and this is the song we normally sing when we rest the cattle in the kraal or under a tree.

Song 4
Eendjabo dalele dafyo unye
Eendjabo dalele dafyo unye, mongulashi kwaso delipula shiifaneno shinyenga natuyenge ike.
Omtete tetekele koudano.
Nde mongula shikwasha delipula, shifaneno shinyenga natuyenyeike (x2)
Mekango lomilongo motwalele (x2)
Nghitukwa afiyapo mhungulula (x2)
Pendukenye endjamba dange (x2)
Ondjila neitwikilwe,elila nail takelwe (x2)
Tukafikee.

Meaning of the song:
This song is dedicated to the cattle. It means:

Our cattle sleep and are surrounded and protected. Let's wait for tomorrow and see what is going to happen.

When arriving back home.

When we travel to the cattle exhibition and competition, we don't go up to the houses with the cattle. We stop a few kilometres from the house and one of the cattle herders goes to inform the people that we are back from the forest. This is the song – ongovela yometembu – sung by herders when reaching the home (egumbo) area to inform the community.

Song 5
Pendukeni eendjaba dangee
Pendukenyee ndjaba dangee (x2)
Dano walele konhu vanda (x2)
Koluvandee lom'shaman Kondjeinasho haShikutu
Dano walele pondje koluvanda (x2)
Ndo sha mana tate neinyongwa shindana,
alfo yilelo kulombwelwa (x2)

Meaning of the song:
Wake up, my elephants
Wake up my elephants
The dance performed all night long at the cattle entrance
At the cattle entrance of Mr Kaleinasho, son of Hashikutu
The dance performed all night long at the cattle entrance

Once the ceremony is arranged, all the cattle herders will gather in the cattle and bring them into the kraal, two by two, to be judged for competition. It is the elders who will check whose cattle are fit to win. To choose the best cattle is okuhidhika.

Cattle exhibition

High skills of ongovela singing and performing are required here, at oshidhano shoongombe. This is where they sing ongovela yeengombe ta di dana. As the cattle herders enter and bring their cattle into the kraal they must perform ongovela and the cattle must also act to the ongovela! They make certain movements that show off the muscles of their bodies. The cattle herders perform ongovela through singing and oral expression. Everyone has his own way of performing ongovela. It depends on what he went through and what he wants to inform the community about.

The song below, as an example, consists of short interlocking phrases through which the cattle herders express themselves.

Song 6
Kuwililee eenghombo
Meme Mukwaudimbe kuwilila nawa (x2)
Eenghombo daShoombe de uya (x2)
Ndo onghuwilili nai tye waka

Omafamba alihole, oudano nau shalute
Omaludi a findulee, eenghwandabi di shombokee...

Meaning of song:
Ululate to welcome the cattle
Lady Mukwaudimbe ululate well
The cattle of Shoombe have arrived
May the ululation become strong
The beautiful girls, may the dance be performed
The cattle competition should commence, the cattle should…
Ending: Ululating with whistling and blow small panpipes.

Here ends Bertha's description.

My research adds to the above, pointing out that in general, this large category of ongovela, with its different repertoires of songs, remains mainly about cattle. Herders might use omusati leaves to whistle with between front teeth and soothe the cattle with these sounds. The songs tell cattle it is time to go and graze, or alternatively, that it is time to return home. Kwanyama men are known to use the *omuxua* (made from pliable omusati bark or river reed, when trekking with cattle) or *epoli* flute at the annual cattle gathering ceremony. The young herders gather in a group and play their flutes, concentrating on a few tones, usually three. At the cattle competitions or even at home, boys might sing to praise their cattle in terms of the cow that produces the best milk or the most calves, or the bull that defeats other bulls of the village. At competitions the fattest animal is the most prized. Men chant to their cattle on an everyday basis when bringing them into the kraal or herding them out to graze in the field. These chants were described to me by tate Simson Mupopya (78 years old) in Ombalanhu as uusita, usually sung by young herders. It includes the shouting of animal names, descriptions (not all of them complimentary) and whistling, as well as other herding sounds (see Chapter 2, p. 34).

Fig. 3.5: Omuxua

Ongovela may be sung to praise loyalty or certain leaders. They can be sung at historical remembrances and, of course, at full moon. When older men gather, they recall the days of their herding experiences when they were young. This is a good time to sing ongovela, even when they are shaking the milk calabash for butter.

What does ongovela sound like? (See Chapter 9 for a transcribed song.) It begins with the solo performer intoning a plaintive melody that starts high and then descends in steps (see Fig. 3.6). The chorus responds with a similar two or three part melody with characteristic harmonic intervals, such as a pause on a strident second. The tempo is measured and slow, but interjections of sounds, like "hau!" create tension and excitement. The soloist might perform an imitation of the horns of the cattle *(okupeta)* and impersonate certain characteristics and qualities of his animals.

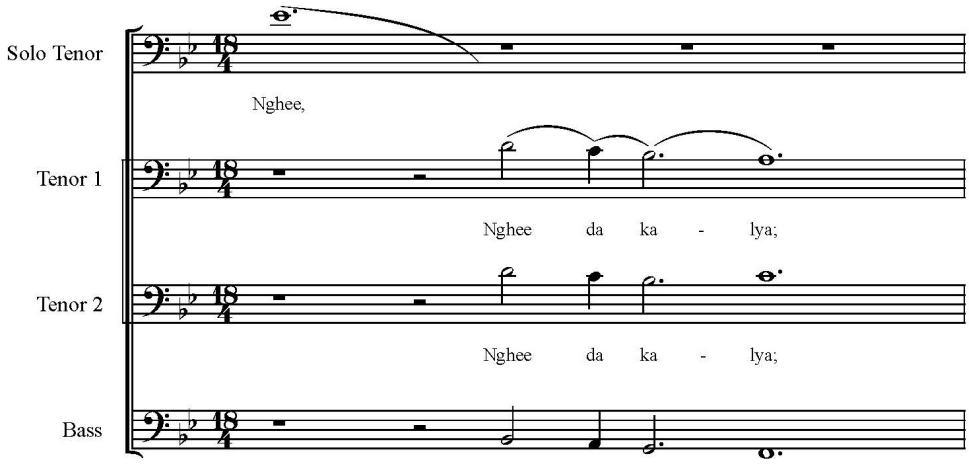

Fig. 3.6: Main section, repeated, of an ongovela ta di dana

A Lion Hunt

The final category of men's songs has relinquished its real meaning in modern times, but is still sung occasionally for pleasure. Songs to celebrate a successful lion killing are called *omunghelo.* It is sung by men with hand clapping and, in the main, resembles ongovela in melody. Women may ululate and dance, but they may not sing.

One needs to remember the abundance of lions in the past, and the danger they posed to humans, especially men travelling through the Andoni (Etosha) from Tsumeb in the past. Therefore, especially a problem lion that preyed on cattle or humans, was a great prize.

When a dead lion was brought in to the king, the king would donate the meat to the successful hunter. The songs were sung during the skinning of the animal. The soloist was the one thought to be best singer for this, not necessarily the hunter. The flesh was then shared out (and eaten fresh or dry), but the head was given to the king.

Omunghelo refers to the songs and dance, but are *not* referred to as oshiimbo shomunghelo. These days they can be sung at cattle competitions as well as weddings.

The above illustrates the diversity of men's categories of music – all related to specific events or conditions. It was, however, notable that the melodic and rhythmic structures (often a free rhythm) of men's music tended to be similar in most types of their songs, unlike those of women that had very clear rhythmic diversities for different repertoires, as you will see in Chapter 4.

4 New from Old: Women and their Weddings

For generations Aawambo women have sung when they work, when they play, when they soothe children, when they worship, but most importantly, when they participate in their most meaningful coming-of-age ceremony, the "traditional wedding" or *olufuko.*[1]

Olufuko and *efundula* – similar ceremonies in the different dialects – can be seen as the musically most important event in Aawambo musical culture. It is/was a mass event with wide participation. Similar to many other cultures worldwide, weddings have long been considered very important events, especially in women's lives. But in traditional Aawambo culture getting married individually was less important than the mass event for young women. The term olufuko is derived from *okufukala* – to undergo a traditional wedding. This event, variously referred to as olufuko, ohango, or efundula, was the large scale ceremony that prepared women for the actual marriage. It is described today as being a customary "celebration of chastity and virginity"[2] but also a means by which a young woman can be "cleansed from the curse" of womanhood and become able to fulfill her destiny.[3] A woman who has undergone and completed the

Fig. 4.1: Women celebrating prior to a wedding (ohango) at Idda (Makende) Shivolo's mother's home in Oukwanyama, 2001

1 In Oukwanyama it is called efundula, in Ondonga ohango, and in other areas, olufuko.
2 Namibia Sun, 2012, 08–23.
3 Namibian Sun, 2012, 08–23.

ceremony was in the past considered a married woman (*omukulukadhi)*. The traditional ceremony was a transition rite for women, socializing and sacralising sex which, prior to olufuko, was frowned upon.

According to Hayes[4] the public nature of the ceremony can be partly attributed to the sedentary nature of the people, and the matrilineal nature of Aawambo. These large ceremonies brought kings and people of all lineages together and cemented the power of the king, and alongside him, the namunganga. While the different traditional Aawambo tribal regions had somewhat different customs for *olufuko,* one thing remains clear even today: this is the first category mentioned by men and women when one asks about music amongst Aawambo. Because the entire Oshiwambo-speaking area is in itself culturally diverse, there are several differences in the manner and meaning of *ohango yiitsali*, *olufuko* and *efundula* as they used to be, and as they are reappearing nowadays. Becker[5] warns us that one needs, therefore, to be cautious in depicting what happened in different places and at different times as unchanging events, or depicting differences in ceremonial style and practice affect as different cultural meanings and understanding. Ethnographic representations do not clearly explain this and therefore, need to be read with caution.

Olufuko used to be extremely significant not only in the passage of a young woman to one of a marriageable state, it carried significance for the entire clan, for the status of the king, the fathers and mothers of the young "brides" and of course, for the brides, *aafuko* themselves. In the past the ideal time for this huge event was announced by the local king, often in the cool dry season (*okufu)*.[6] In reading this chapter it should be taken into consideration that different written sources and different persons interviewed invoked contrasting meanings and memories of these ceremonies. What appears here is a brief condensed version, gleaned from elderly interviewees who underwent the tradition a long time ago, as well as written sources.

Historical records and photographs show that in the past, efundula was attended by hundreds of people, with a hundred to two hundred "brides" in addition to their accompanying relatives, young girls and drummers. In the 1930's "Cocky" Hahn, Native Commissioner in the region, arranged for the efundula event to be "staged" for his visitors. To ask that such efundula dances be repeated for high-ranking colonial visitors was apparently not unusual for him.[7] This sight appears in his panoramic photographs The

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4 See P. Hayes, 1998.

5 In S. Arnfred, 2005, p. 40.

6 Traditionally there are three seasons to the Aawambo agricultural cosmos: a hot dry season, a cool dry season, and a hot rainy season.

7 P. Hayes. 1998.

Kwanyama were the most numerous of the Aawambo tribal groups, and the only group who made such prolific use of the drums (eengoma) during efundula. However, Ndonga ohango yiitsali ceremonies were equally huge. The ceremonies are thought to have taken place every fifth year in the 1800s, while Rautanen[8] as well as meekulu Malyana Ishitile mention its occurrence every second year.

However, as described in Chapter 1, the early twentieth century puritan missionaries and white colonists convinced the increasing number of Christian Aawambo to slowly relinquish these events, which came to be seen as "heathen". They were so successful at this that efundula and olufuko became secret, smaller events in Namibia, or took place across the border in Angola. Persons who were known to have participated in olufuko in one way or another were banned from church. As a result of this underground nature, much knowledge about these important events has been lost and many young urban women today reject and are afraid of the procedures.[9] However, the importance of the event is reified by several Oshiwambo-speaking artists, e.g., Lucky Kapanda in Figs. 4.2 and 4.3. There is a move towards reinstating olufuko as a significant cultural event in Ombalanhu, despite strong objections from the Lutheran church (ELCIN). Thus a "public" olufuko took place in Outapi in 2012 and another in 2014.

Fig. 4.2: An artist's impression of Mbalanhu aafuko's procession to the ceremony, with their special hair, pots of grain to present, and skirts adorned with shells in the Mbalanhu tradition

Fig. 4.3: An artist's impression of ovafuko dancing at efundula in Oukwanyama, with their eengoma accompaniment, characteristic hairstyles, and shell-adorned skirts

8 Rautanen, M. 1888, cited by Tuupainen, 1970, was the first Finnish missionary in the area.

9 See Mans, 2004, p. 87, 90, writing about changing body perceptions amongst young women in Namibia, and the notion that "tradition" is often linked to concepts like "old-fashioned" and "rural".

Hence the nature of olufuko should not be seen as unchanging over time. It is unusual in the sense of the social importance invested in women by these events, and this may well have had to do with the relinquishing of male circumcision as an event, and the resulting need for kings to demonstrate their social power.[10] Contemporary olufuko strives to eliminate or limit the secret aspects of traditional olufuko so criticized by religious institutions and most probably, by having a female namunganga in charge of the ceremony. One of the purposes of contemporary olufuko is to reinstate the value of not falling pregnant before marriage and to reduce the occurrence of schoolgirl teenage pregnancy.

So the question to be asked is: what was the nature of these transformative events in the past and how do they relate to contemporary marriages? Since efundula and *ohango yaakintu* ceremonies have been well documented in Namibia,[11] this chapter will focus mainly on olufuko and ohango yiitsali in the western regions. In the past, Ndonga women underwent ohango yaakintu separately from other tribal groups, as did the Kwanyama women their efundula. The less numerous tribal groups in western areas practiced similar ceremonies and called them olufuko or ohango. This ohango should not be confused with the Christian ohango of today. The young women of the western tribes were organized into groups who travelled to Ombalanhu for the occasion, but separately – as Kwaluudhi,

Fig. 4.4: A few of the efundula drummers, ca. 1930

[10] Read an excellent article on this theory by P. Hayes, 1998.
[11] See e.g. M. Tuupainen, 1970.

Ngandjera, and so on. I could find no reference to Kolonkadhi, Ombadja or Ovaunda women. Kwaluudhi and Mbalanhu brides underwent olufuko together, and previously with Ngandjeras. At a later stage, Ngandjera brides had a separate ceremony, also held in Ombalanhu.

This is the story we were told about Kwaluudhi brides. It is about olufuko according to meekulu Magano Kakwambi [12] of Olukulo near Tsandi whose age was uncertain, but she was born during the reign of King Mwaala Nashilongo in the early part of the twentieth century. The ceremony for Kwaluudhi girls used to be held in winter (dry cool season), but more recently, after the harvest. Everyone travelled on foot to Ombalanhu for the event. Uukwaluudhi's royal home is at Tsandi, and the aafuko were expected to gather there, and then walk the remaining 30-something kilometres to Ombalanhu.

> First the king informed the people that parents should select the daughters they consider ready for olufuko. The parents then let the king know how many aafuko they have selected. Then everyone had to wait until Manyangaapo (king at Ombalanhu) informed the Kwaluudhi king of a suitable time. He then sent Kalili [13] to come and fetch the aafuko. We were all to meet up at namunganga gwombala,[14] but waited at a certain tree until everyone was there so that we could all proceed further together. We proceeded in single file with Kalili leading, then the namunganga, followed by the aafuko, and finally the aatsali (relatives of the aafuko who accompany the aafuko). There were five or more aatsali to accompany each of us. We (aafuko) were already dressed in our bridal dress for the olufuko when we began the procession. We carried large clay bowls of beer on our heads, and the omahangu that we had specially pounded, and other food that we were going to eat there during olufuko. Also, we carried ostrich eggs and salt which had been pounded and was now kept in a bowl (eemhalo dhomongwa). This salt was a gift to the namunganga at Ombalanhu. All the while as we walked the aatsali aunts would ligola (ululate) and chant. After a long walk we reached Ombalanhu where we waited until after sunset to approach the home of king Mwanyangapo. That's where we all slept that night. On awakening in the morning, the aatsali prepared onguta (food) for us. After this breakfast everyone (namunganga, aafuko and aatsali) proceeded to namunganga gwombala, which was close to the king's home. Then Kalili went home after informing the king that the brides had arrived. We were anointed by the aunts with a special salve (olukwe) and then we went to olweneene, which is the oshana where the aafuko play and dance during olufuko. There brides and relatives played [ordinary] uudhano until the afternoon. If a bride became tired or fell down, she would be accused of being pregnant, which was forbidden. That first day we couldn't eat anything or go anywhere – just dance. After this, the aatsali returned to the king's homestead where they stayed for the five days that we underwent the rituals of ohango. We aafuko returned to namunganga gwombala. The following day (okakota) we moved, to sleep at a secret place for the next days with shelters built by the namungangas. We were seen by no one except the namunganga.

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12 Interviewed in 1999 at Olukulo village.

13 A special royal messenger for olufuko.

14 Namunganga's place or home.

[Kakwambi does not mention the name of the place, nor all the Kwaluudhi names of the days of ohango. She tells nothing of what occurs during the days of the brides' isolation, but takes up her story on the day they emerge.]

On the fourth day all the aafuko came out and proceeded again to the king's house, where the relatives (men and women) played uudhano in celebration, but not the brides. Then on the fifth day we returned to Uukwaluudhi and the next morning we were dressed in ondjaya (a long string of beads worn over one shoulder) given from the mother's side. This was a ceremony called esiko lyelalo lyohango.

Oh yes, after the king had slaughtered cattle, our parents were informed and they could also slaughter cattle at the namunganga's place and then they could come to fetch us. Thus on the day of slaughtered cattle the men would approach shaking their spears and shouting "hango woo, hango woo!" and jumping and showing off. People sang and played uudhano. The father's side of the family was given the back of the slaughtered animal, and the mother's side the shoulder. We presented the meat to people for eating. Then mothers played uudhano wohango while the men watched and worked on the belts they were making. So we spent two days there and on the third went home. Two, three weeks later the aatsali came back to namunganga gwombala to brew beer. They slept there and next day we brides came out and our bridal clothing was ceremonially removed (ekululo). Again our mothers played uudhano but not us. And then we went home.

After harvest the omahangu stems were usually cut, but there was a corridor that was never cut. Then, in spring or early summer at a time of full moon, people would prepare a ceremony called oshinkono and they would set fire to the part not cut (ofwala). When people saw the smoke they knew oshinkono was taking place. An omufuko's parent would brew beer, and pound dried nuts for cooking. Next day we could all eat and that night go to oshana to play uudhano. When the playing was finished a girl could go to her fiancé's home (if she had one). Oshinkono was where a bride price was paid, usually cattle, goats or sheep, but never thin cattle.

Such was one woman's experience of ohango/olufuko.[15] It is interesting to note that this ohango (olufuko) made no use of drums during the dancing, only omatemo beaten with a little stick. According to meekulu Kakwambi anybody who wanted to, could play omatemo. When many Angolan girls attended there were drums.

Characteristics

Not wishing to appear to "fix" the processes involved in olufuko to one formulaic procedure, I have tried to extract commonalities from interviews and literature so as to describe the social circumstance of this important ceremony. From discussions with various older

[15] Not all of the procedure concerning the days make complete sense to me, but due to her age it was impossible to pin down exact memories.

women,[16] a few general "rules" emerge amongst the diversities. Characteristics common to all are:

- the important purpose of creating a transition between childhood and womanhood, thereby being prepared for adult life, becoming marriageable and allowing pregnancy;
- nowhere was a girl allowed to be pregnant or to have given birth prior to olufuko; it was a taboo which caused mortal danger (*oshidhila)* to her kin, hence there were always tests for the girls' ability to withstand pain and for pregnancy; these tests were central to the ceremony;
- ceremonies were always a group rite;
- instruction, song and dance played crucial roles in all ceremonies and are thought to express the desire for fertility;[17]
- seasons for the ceremonies differed, but an important point was that it always had to start and end during the new moon period;
- there was always a *namunganga* or *mwene gwohango* in charge of the event;
- each day was named and had a specific nature and function;
- transition ceremonies had an impact on families, who had to start growing enough omahangu well before the time, acquire salt, and prepare for the making of much beer.

Transition rites are common to many cultures around the world, and may take place at different ages. The right to bear children and to have one's fertility ensured is one of the most important rites. In Aawambo culture, a girl's "purity" before this transition was previously considered extremely important. So important that breaking this taboo was in certain cases punishable by death.[18] Prior to olufuko, young women stayed at their family homes. They met young men at full moon games and, of course, on many other social occasions such as celebrations, visits to homes, and so on. But sexual intercourse was to be avoided and pregnancy taboo. During olufuko young women underwent fertility rites, such as the eating of specially "doctored" food with medicine from the *omugolo* bush (*Terminalea sericea)*, *oimbodi* (herbs eaten daily during efundula) and *omukwiyu* (wild fig leaves). The wild fig tree symbolizes ancestors' spirits[19] and such good medicine would protect aafuko during this somewhat dangerous magical period. Its fruits also symbolized

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16 Kakwambi, Ishitile, Lukeniko, Amukwenya, Abisai, Amukutuwa,

17 Tuupainen, 1970, p. 51.

18 According to Pastor Amukutuwa, personal interview, Elim, 2000. Also, see Tuupainen 1970.

19 Tuupainen, 1970, p. 46.

fertility. Aafuko were instructed in the many ways in which to be a good wife, including instruction in sexual ways. Underlying the entire ritual was the purpose of preparing for a good life blessed with children.

The taboo of pregnancy is probably the idea that came through most emphatically in all the interviews I held. A girl who was unable to complete olufuko as a result of pregnancy would – apart from other severe punishments – always remain *omukadhona,* a child. Meekulu Monica Abisai stressed the importance of strength and endurance, as well as societal values in the tests aafuko had to undergo. Firstly, the correct amount of ground millet had to be taken to namunganga. If one arrived with too little that would reflect poorly on the girl and her family and bring bad luck. Mee Abisai stated that an important point of the entire transition ceremony was that endurance challenges helped to prepare the brides for the difficulties of adult life. She confirmed this as a transition ceremony by saying that olufuko represents a division between girlhood and womanhood. During olufuko, the aafuko are expected to pound millet, and to sing and dance in the sun from morning until afternoon. This is part of *oluanene,*[20] or *ehaneko* (Kwambi), the test to ensure that no bride is pregnant at this time. If a girl would be found to be pregnant they would cut off her elende (bridal hair style), and it would bring great shame on her family.[21] This shame is so great that in Uukwambi, for example, Pastor Jason Amukutuwa stated that breaking taboo (*oshidhila)* would lead to a pregnant girl being taken forcibly (*fehu)*, to a tree called *omwandi gwaa simbakadhona,* and from there she would be banished to Oukwanyama, never to set foot in Uukwambi again. Not even her children were allowed to return. He stated that Aakwambi did not kill a pregnant omufuko, but that it was known that in some cases or some areas such a girl would be burnt to death under the cover of the roof of her olufuko

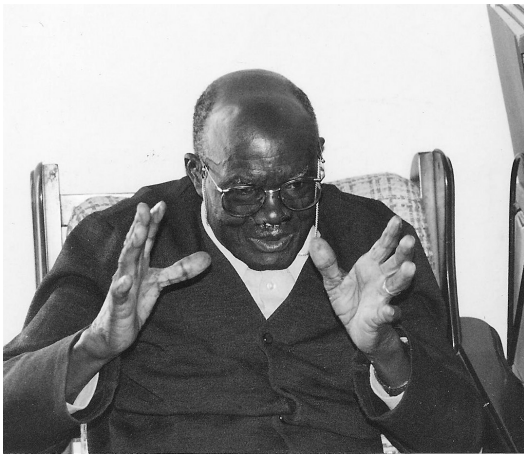

Fig. 4.5: Pastor Amukutuwa describing olufuko in Elim in 2000

[20] Also referred to as omalua omanene, being given a difficult time.

[21] A young man was, however, allowed to visit the home of a young woman even before olufuko, and then they would pound omahangu together. This would tell her that he likes her.

shelter. Some say that the young man who caused the pregnancy would also be burned; others say he would be banished. Severe punishment indeed!

The tests for pregnancy were manifold. Away from the initiation place, the first was spending a day nearly naked in the hot sun. The second was drinking beer prepared by the namunganga prior to arriving at the feast site. This potion was believed to affect only a pregnant girl by making her vomit. The third test was pounding omahangu strenuously for long periods in the sun. If she weakened or seemed dizzy, she would be thrown out. In Uukwaluudhi we were shown a gate that aafuko had to climb through. The gate could in other areas apparently be an arch of palm branches (*oshikulo)*. It was said that a pregnant girl could not pass through this gate. She would fall down. Her hair would then be cut off and she would be chased away. If all went well and they passed all the tests, the girls were sprinkled with powdered omahangu flour and taken to the initiation place for the first time. The following morning they were again given "doctored" food and had to go back to pounding the omahangu. And then, at midday, they would start the proper olufuko dances with *uututula* [22], *okuligola,* playing of etemo, clapping of hands and singing. Men were forbidden at this dance.

Olufuko ceremonies were always a group rite, unlike that of many other African cultures. It was always called by the tribal king or chief. In each region, according to its customs, the ages of the girls were slightly different, and ranged from a period after first menstruation up to the age of about thirty years. Even when smaller groups such as Aangandjera, Aambalanhu, Aakwambi and Aakwaluudhi celebrated their olufuko together, they still kept quite strictly to their own specific rules. Many prohibitions existed, one of which stated that if the olufuko took place in Uukwaluudhi, the aafuko would die, or become sterile. Since this was told by a Mbalanhu woman, it may refer only to them? In addition, the role of older women ("aunt-ies" and mothers) was important, and they did much of the dancing and singing that provided

Fig. 4.6: The Kwaluudhi gate with its V at the Tsandi royal house

[22] Good footwork and foot stamping.

the festive atmosphere. They anointed their daughters daily, and saw that everything was provided for. They are referred to as *aatsali* in the western regions, and *ooihoyontali* in Ndonga. The smaller girls who went along played an important role as well, being the ones who had to pound meal for the daily food, and to do the general chores involved in keeping things clean, fires burning, and people fed. Certainly they observed the different rites and behaviours, so that they themselves were somewhat preparing for their own future olufuko. Fathers, brothers and suitors were important, not only as drummers where drumming was used, but also to praise daughters, to act as audiences, and to ensure that everyone was safe at these large gatherings. Young prepubescent boys acted as "grooms" for the brides during parts of the ceremony. Men and boys showed their participation in special songs, and in the energetic *okutanha* "hango woo" performances, shaking their spears (*omagonga)* and leaping in the air. This was one of the key rites in olufuko. However, it was forbidden for men and aafuko to communicate during olufuko and in some areas even for the months after.

Song, dance, musical instruments and dress all formed an important part of the instruction and the entire ritual. It is thought by anthropologists that the purpose of the entire rite was to ensure the fertility of a woman, since it was believed that a woman was responsible for the success or failure to conceive.[23] Olufuko is described as a marriage rite because being mature implies fertility and child bearing, and the purpose of marriage is having children and creating a family. It's not surprising therefore, that some of the songs (*uundangala wohango)* express the desire for fertility.[24] Dancing, as we know, is an expression of vital energy, ephebism (youth) and life force, therefore of crucial importance to this rite. In addition, drumming acts as a powerful energizing force for the dance, and is also a symbol of fertility.

Some songs are solely for the brides, while others are for the mothers to sing. One example of a bride's song in Ombalanhu is "Lya Naumbwabwa" which is an ouvano song sung for the first day of olufuko. The beginning of the song goes

Ekulo Naumbwabwa
Ekulo lya Naumbwabwa (chorus *ye-ye ye*)
lyaNausizi wombuwa (*ye ye ye*) (repeated several times)
Hali alu la Aawambo
O lya liku Tuuleni.

[23] Tuupainen, 1970 citing Richards 1950 and B. Liljeblad 1952.
[24] Tuupainen, 1970, p. 51.

It means:
The salt pan (big kitchen) of Naumbwabwa
Of the desert
Turns some people back
It was for Tuuleni.

Songs related to olufuko include those that are sung before the time while preparing by pounding the special omahangu. That is when *nangalala* is sung (Ombalanhu). In Ongandjera women spoke of *ekoteko,* which were sung and danced by mothers of brides at the actual event, but which may perhaps be performed at other times. This is contradicted by Saarti Lukeniko who said it was specific to ohango and only performed during the Ombalanhu week of the ceremony. But since they did perform it in Ongandjera the afternoon I was recording them, it may be a case of the traditional role of a certain dance changing over time, losing its original meaning and value. It is, however, never performed by the brides themselves. When the procession of aafuko and aatsali moves towards the feast place (*onkulumbala)*, the Mbalanhu mothers would sing *ohale,* which are responsorial songs.

Fathers and male relatives create special songs – *onano* – to praise their daughters undergoing this difficult personal journey. It is when the brides leave the initiation to return home that the men sing and play onano (oontanto) – songs that show their happiness that the brides have gone through the test. Kwambi men speak of a father creating a special song for his daughter, called *ikuni* and meaning literally firewood. Men and potential husbands might play *omupembe* and *enghandi* at the ohango, but separately from dances the women perform. Then there are of course many wedding songs – *oshiimbo shohango* – which are also sung at modern weddings today. See further on for details about the type of songs and when they were sung.

Olufuko Dances

Keeping in mind that dances are always in a process of creative change, the following description is merely that of my own observations of dances performed not during actual olufuko or efundula, but in recreating these dances for my benefit and for cultural festivals. Thus, a brief analysis of olufuko dances demonstrates the following characteristics:

Structurally, *ekoteko* was danced by duos (a pair) in the centre of an inward-facing circle or semicircle of singing and clapping participants who awaited their own turns.

The structure of ekoteko further showed that it consisted of only a single movement phase which was repeated. When taking a turn, players move into the centre space and perform a series of double-stamp-pause sequences, with arms raised well above their heads. This sequence is repeated before they return to their places in the outer circle and the next two take their turn. Their movements utilize the space quite modestly, with turns mostly on the spot and away (outwards) from the partner. *Tyatyala* was similarly made up of a single continuous phase. *Fundula* dancers made generous use of space as a group when moving around in circular space surrounded by singing, clapping and drumming participants. The steps they took in moving across the ground were quite generous, but when aafuko faced the drummers in head-swing movements, the wider use of space was abandoned, and personal space use was minimal.

The bodily stance of ekoteko dancers was almost upright, with lifted arms in a fairly wide position, while torso and body were kept in a narrow stance. Fundula (bridal) dance at the part of the ritual where they dance in a line in front of the drums, is narrow, arms often hanging at sides or waving the gnu tail. The emphasis here is on the loose, trance-like swinging of the head and neck.

Smaller components of the typical movements in ekoteko are (i) double foot stamps to ground with arms aloft in horn formation, and (ii) half turns with swirls of the bead-weighted skirt (ondelela). Tyatyala also makes multiple uses of stamps, while fundula bridal dance makes more use of shoulder shakes, with their heads rolled from side to side.

Typical of so many Aawambo dances, the rhythmic patterns that guide clapping, drumming and stamping of feet are often isochronous, meaning that they contain sequences with irregular number of beats, as well as more common regular patterns of 6 or 8. Hence, in ekoteko we find that the clapping and stamps are synchronized on a 14 pulse sequence [7+7]. It sounds like (2 + 2 + 1 + 2) + (1 + 2 + 2 + 2), or as in Fig. 4.7, repeated many times.

X		X		X	X	
X	X		X		X	

Fig. 4.7: Ekoteko basic rhythmic pattern

The relation of dancers' feet to the ground in ekoteko was always close, in other words their feet were placed flat on the ground and lifted only a small distance for the next stamp. This leads to small stamps and outward brushing movements of the feet. Tyatyala uses stamps close to ground, while fundula dancers use rather light steps when they move, but in the head rolling phases their feet remain stationary.

The effort used in their dance movements in ekoteko was forceful with smooth transitions between stamps and brushes of feet, and occasional movements of lower torso (pelvic contractions and thrusts) were sudden but with less effort. This pertains to typical smaller, "cooler" and more controlled movements that one would expect of mature women. Younger dancers performing fundula or uudhano would use greater effort, as this also expresses their youthfulness. So fundula dancers used forceful head-swings, which after a certain length of time appeared to induce a trancelike status. Drummers tapped into this energy by increasing their drumming energy and using leaping movements while continuing to pound the drum. Fundula dancers' spatial movements were energetic, often tending toward sudden changes of direction, or arm movements.

So, one wonders, what would identify a good dancer? What are the aesthetic values that are prominent in these different dances?

Ekoteko aesthetic values demand a rapid execution of stamps with fairly upright body and good arms mark the good dancer. This requires good synchrony with her partner by communicating silently to prepare for every movement. The best dancers are able to do dual improvisation probably because they practice together. This implies a certain regularity of partnerships in this dance of the mothers. Finally, a certain "attitude" that challenges onlookers, and a good finish to the set, clearly points out who have mastered the skills of this dance. In fundula, as one may expect given the circumstances, it appears that lasting power and energy, and being able to keep up the dizzying head swings, are prized in dancers, in addition to good communication with and response to the drums.

Musical Instruments

Musical instruments usually include *omatemo* (singular), referring to a single hoe blade struck with a thin metal stick (*omumwhelele)* by *omupiithi* ("gatekeeper") and *omnene mukwao* ("other big fellow"). *Etemo* are two hoe blades struck against each other. Hoe blades appear to have had an important symbolic meaning, since they could be used in healings as well as olufuko.

Fig. 4.8: Ekoteko danced by Lukeniko and Amukweya (video shot)

Fig. 4.9: Okayagayaga, played by Vistorina Amukweya, with Saarti Lukeniko looking on

The whistle (*ohiya* or *oshiva)* is common, blown by female relatives as they dance, even today. The same terms were sometimes used for the ceremonial kudu, oryx or cattle horn blown by a man to alert the brides[25], although *enghuma* (Kwanyama) and *ondhila* (Ndonga) are also used. There were concussion sticks (*enghongholo)* and rattles from seeds of the *omushegele* tree played by one woman. And then the rattles (*oshikalakala* in Kwanyama) worn around the ankles added to the sound as the dances were performed with energetic stamping of feet.

The large efundula drums propped up on a sturdy forked branch are associated only with Kwanyama ceremonies, though previously Ndonga ceremonies also included drums. To play the efundula drums is *okufukita.* I was told by Vistorina Amukwayo that they, the Ngandjera aafuko, used to play *okayagayaga* (the scraped, mouth-resonated musical bow) during the long procession to and from Ombalanhu.

Clothing

In terms of special dress, aafuko in the past used to go to olufuko with their pre-olufuko hairstyles, different in every region.[26] Fig. 4.11 shows my rough field drawing of a Ngandjera woman's post-olufuko traditional wear.

In Ombalanhu the aafuko would remove their elende braids on the day they started the pounding of grain while singing nangalala, to take to olufuko. Since the elende hair

Fig. 4.10: Oishakiti ankle rattles used in dancing

[25] To blow this horn is okufuko.

[26] See Scherz, et al. for the different styles.

had been removed at home, they wore reddish strings of hair made from the cut off braids over the front of their faces. Ishitile said that Mbalanhu women called the brides' wear *oihanangolo,* a term used differently in Ondonga and Oukwanyama. In the latter, brides coming out were painted in a white ash mixture and wore a collar of thin wooden planks. These oihanangolo would be accompanied by younger assistants and be allowed to roam around freely for about three weeks. There were specific songs for them – *oshiimbo shoihanangolo.* During this period they assumed alter-egos, took on the name of a legendary warrior, and acted with the "bravery" of men, even attacking young men who came in their way.

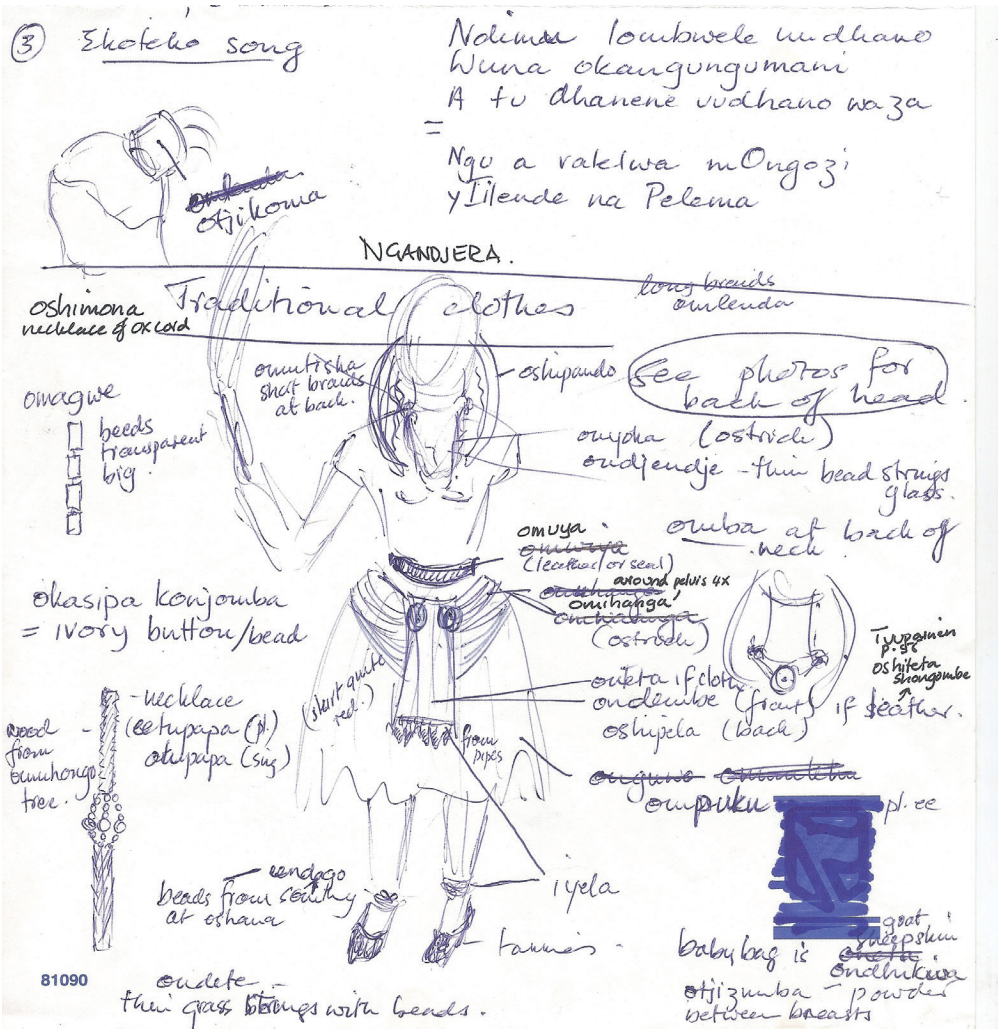

Fig. 4.11: A rough field sketch of Ngandjera traditional dress after undergoing olufuko

Fig. 4.12: Historic photo of oihanangolo at Namakunde, with accompanying younger girls, 1917

Before the procession to the feasting place aafuko were dressed in special clothing, but while staying at the secret place (*okakota* in Kwaluudhi and *egumbo eli hali putifwa omafundula* in Kwanyama) during olufuko they were basically naked unless appearing in public. The only cladding they wore was a piece of leather or cloth (*elapi)* covering their female parts and *ongodhi* skirts from palm leaves which predict fertility. Ishitile confirmed that they did not sing at the secret place. They only sang when they emerged. This makes sense since their secret hideouts might soon be discovered if they sang while there! Every day each omufuko was anointed by her mother or accompanying relative. When they finally "came out" on successful completion of the secret rites, they were anointed by their mothers with the special ointment (*olukulo* or *olukwe)* again and then donned their olufuko clothing. At this time they would be ceremonially decorated with strings of beads hanging over the shoulder, such as *ondjaya* (*epole* in Ndonga) from father and mother's sides of her family.

In contemporary olufuko the girls wear *ondelela* (the short reddish-pink skirt considered traditional Aawambo wear) and go bare breasted. A local report on the 2012 olufuko at Outapi stated:

> [O]ne ritual required the girls to jump over a fire outside the homestead. A ritual called okukokola was last on the list. The girls were smeared with Omalodu, a traditional brew. They were given figurines made of salt from Ongandjera. Crafted specifically for them, the statues called *empalo,* symbolise babies, and were even given names by the girls.[27]

[27] Shinovene Immanuel, *Namibian Sun*, 2012-08-28

This appears to confirm the fertility and motherhood relation as well as a contemporary desire to revive and continue earlier olufuko customs.

Time and Place

Seasons for the ceremonies differed, but an important point was that it always had to start and end during the new moon period, as this related to fertility. Ngandjera girls, like Kwaluudhi girls, went to Ombalanhu for olufuko, although from what Helvi Kakola and Vistorina Amukwayo told me at Oshukwa, their process began after first menstruation. Then her parents would negotiate with any woman who has already undergone olufuko to accompany the girl to Ombalanhu, to take blankets, a basket of specially ground salt, tobacco and omatemo. The girl herself would be carrying omahangu meal in a large basket. The older Mbalanhu women tell us that they are happy for those who have had the opportunity to undergo olufuko. They see them as special. They say that fathers used to decide when the time was ripe for a specific girl to go, but the mother had to agree. Their olufuko ceremony was traditionally in the dry season before the harvest, joined by Kwaluudhi women. Some informants mentioned the ceremony being after the harvest, round about May or June. In Uukwambi olufuko occurred in the rainy season. Nowadays olufuko is organized around times when many people come home, close to or in school holidays, i.e. somewhere between November and January.

According to tradition, the three main places where the rites took place in the past were all at burial places of deceased, circumcised kings. Before celebrations began, there used to be a ceremonial slaughtering of a black ox and rituals were performed – sprinkling blood over the grave, and dropping certain pieces of the carcass around the palisades surrounding the grave, so that ancestors would know they have not been forgotten. Since olufuko is now so rare it is doubtful whether such complete honouring rituals still occur.

Namunganga

The *namunganga* had a very important role to play in olufuko. It was at olufuko and efundula that the aanamunganga came into their own. The namunganga, *omupitifi,* or *onganga yohango* supervised the entire ceremony from start to finish. They themselves were selected and appointed by the king or local headman (as in the case of Ombalanhu where there was no king). Namunganga had to be chosen from a family of herbalists and had to

have experience as a diviner.[28] Most colonial literature refers to a male namunganga, as did the women I spoke to. However, mention is made of a female namunganga in Ondonga[29] and Ombalanhu[30] and it appears that a woman might direct the efundula if she was the daughter of a circumcised man.[31] Ombalanhu also has a female namunganga nowadays.[32] The important matter was the role of *namunganga* or *mwene gwohango* (Ndonga), as controllers of the ceremony. Older texts mention that the female namunganga had two or three assistant women (*iikumbi)* in Ondonga. Aangandjera refer to a namunganga as *omupiithi gwohango.* However, omupiithi is also a term for the leading person and singer during ohango, thus indicating that the leader of the song and dance performances was of great importance. It is quite possible that in current times olufuko is being decentralised and de-sexualised so that, while drawing on older models and practices, it redefines the rite of passage in new contexts.[33] The chief namunganga always appears to have been in control of the entire ceremony. The home of the namunganga was usually near to the royal homestead where the aatsali found storage for *omalovu* or *oshikundu* (millet beer), space for their personal belongings, and for sleeping. This was where the payments made to aanamunganga by aafuko families were deposited. On arrival of the procession of aafuko and aatsali, the namunganga would be presented with the specially prepared baskets of salt, tobacco, and omahangu. This was told by a daughter of a namunganga who practiced during Kamhaku Kahuhwa's reign.[34] Namunganga are paid with omatemo (a hoe blade), important beads called *ekoti* and *omunini,* as well as receiving the shoulder and neck of the bovine that was slaughtered specially.

During olufuko the namunganga was in charge of the care and challenges aafuko were presented with. The main tasks were to prepare and ensure that the brides ate the "doctored" foods *(iigwanga* – herb "doctored" omahangu (elsewhere described as roots (*omidhi)* from the wild fig (*omugolo)* that were ground up and mixed with flour) that they were given on the second day of olufuko to ensure fertility. Other tasks were to oversee the building of the brides' shelters at the secret initiation place; to ensure that all the protocols were strictly followed and that the brides passed all the endurance tests. Some texts and a few women mentioned that in some cases, a male namunganga stirred the special beer

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28 See discussion on "witch doctors" in Nampala & Shigwedha, 2006, p. 28.

29 Amukutuwa, 2000, referring to Kwambi events; M. Tuupainen, 1970, and P. Hayes, 1998. Hayes goes into in depth discussion of the probable gender and role of the namunganga in securing the political power of kings.

30 My informants Ishitile and Kakwambi.

31 Davies, 1987, p.109.

32 Namibian Sun (http://www.namibiansun.com) 2012-08-23.

33 Hayes, 1998.

34 Malyanna Ishitile of Outapi, who referred to herself in these terms.

for the brides with his penis, thus further assuring fertility – and adding another test. It was said in the past that sexual intercourse between the male and female namungangas helped to ensure fertility. Some sources whisper about the namunganga performing female genital mutilation on each of the aafuko, but this has not been confirmed. Women do, however, speak of jumping over a wide fire and that this can make one insane (*omadhila)* if not initiated. Whether this is a metaphor referring to mutilation or merely the actual fire could not be confirmed.

Although many people celebrated olufuko /ohango in Ombalanhu where the Mbalanhu namunganga was in charge, their "own" tribal namunganga took over when they returned home, for example in Ongandjera.

The Process

The days of olufuko were named for their different functions and meanings. The days do not appear to have the same names in the different dialects, which complicates description and analysis of this aspect, since many people confuse these names. It seems that the duration of olufuko differed somewhat in each region. Furthermore, the number of days was more extensive in olden times than they became later. There are many possible reasons for this including: olufuko and efundula became frowned on by church and state during the twentieth century; the cost of such large gatherings became crippling; girls started attending schools; and their fathers were often migrant labourers down south. Nevertheless, it appears that although olufuko transformations in more recent times might be shorter in duration, they still retain the essential ritual progress of days.

It is hard to tell from my informants whether the Ngandjera aafuko counted their three days in Ombalanhu and then again from day one in Ongandjera as certain data doesn't quite match up. However, I will attempt to sort information out in the following step by step explanation.

The first phase of all the transitions was the preparation. It began with the king announcing a date for that year's ceremony. Messengers would proceed to the regions and inform everyone. Parents would identify girls to undergo the ritual and they would, in return inform the king (via the messenger) of the names and numbers of proposed aafuko. Aakwambi girls could experience olufuko in their own region and, when parents identified a girl as being ready, she would not be allowed to go to work. She would know when she saw *oshisha* – the basket. Then would begin preparations at home, planting and harvesting enough grain such as millet (omahangu) and sorghum (for beer) for the upcoming

feasts. The young women's part was pounding large amounts of omahangu and smaller special quantities of pounded salt. According to mee' Maria Ishitile, the *elende* braids were plaited around this time. She tells of the many preparations made. Before going to olufuko, the selected girls for olufuko pounded the meal (*omatwa gohango)* as they sang *nangalala.* They had to fill a large basket from the father's side for an omutsali to carry, and a small basket for the smaller girl (the "frog")[35] to carry. The house would be full of people to celebrate this momentous occasion. They would drink *omulovu* and feast. Ishitile said that they pounded for two days.[36] So, on the second day they again pounded omahangu (*omatwa omatyali)* and then proceeded to the namunganga's house, still singing nangalala (Mbalanhu).

Then began the procession. Aafuko would be dressed in special ohango *onguwo* dress (Ngandjera). *Esiko lyelalo lyohango* is the ceremonial donning of the *ondjaya* – ohango dress. If from outside Ombalanhu, they were led by a selected person,[37] but women of different names appear to have performed this task in other regions. The namunganga was next, followed in single file by aafuko and lastly aatsali. Among the mature aatsali were younger girls for day-to-day pounding of grain. There was usually a leading woman called *omutetekeli.*

The second phase is the olufuko process itself with its tests and secret procedures. In the past, the first day involved the arrival of procession(s) in Ombalanhu, led by the old woman clashing omatemo together, in the case of the western groups. In Ondonga they would gather at namunganga's homestead, and when the call *"Ohango yiitsali nayi sakale*" was given by the female namunganga, all the aafuko, aatsali and smaller girls would gather at her place. There the aafuko had to chew raw omahangu (for fertility) with sour milk. They had to keep their heads down and be very respectful.[38] Those who travelled to Ombalanhu had to wait until sunset at the big baobab tree until everyone was there. Then they proceeded to the Mbalanhu's place – still in single file. They would proceed to the main sleeping room of the namunganga's house where singing and dancing would take place. The omutetekeli (Kalili) would announce their arrival to the king. The namunganga would call out each one's name and kinship, and then the girls had to pass one by

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35 See Tuupainen, 1970, for a brief description of the meaning of this term, as it alludes to sexual relations at the time of olufuko.

36 This was most probably good practice for the endurance tests ahead.

37 Kalili, in Kakwambi's narration.

38 Tuupainen, 1970, p. 46.

one over a fire. After this they proceeded to the oshoto near the cattle kraal and later to their sleeping places.[39] The feasting could now begin.

In Oukwanyama the first day of efundula is called *okaombehuhwa.* According to Ishitile there were no specific names for the different days in Ombalanhu, but this is unlikely. An article in the *Namibian Sun*[40] describes the first day (*ekoho)* in modern Ombalanhu as being when the "young bride prepares the homestead by starting a fireplace and the elders dress her in beautiful hand-made beaded jewellery and plait her hair with long braids to attract the opposite sex."

The second day called *omakwato* (Kwambi), *omakunde* (Mbalanhu) and *okambadjona* ("little jackal" in Kwanyama), began when everyone was woken by the horn (*enghuma)* being blown (*eesiko aafuko taa liliwa kedhila*) with a sound that imitated a large bird. Aafuko were given a special brew to sip from the namunganga's container. The man (chosen by namunganga) went about blowing this oryx horn while trying to hook down the clothes of the aafuko, who tried to get away to prevent this.[41] Brides would be anointed by their mothers with a special mixture. Older women sang olufuko songs and brides danced, while old women beat etemo and men played drums (if customary). Mothers sang songs to praise their daughters and the clan from which she comes. An example of such a song:

Omukwaluvala (clan name)
Tala kongolo ya nyolwa, ya nyolekeka
Oly'einyola ya tya omakonda
Yanyolwa ya ty'oupolindo vayo
Yanyolwa ya fewa, ya fewekeka
Ongolo ya nyolwa nokomushila……

Translation:
Look at the knee, written, perfectly
Who wrote it with stripes?
Written with its designs
Written perfectly
A knee written until the tail
(Lukileni, 2004, p. 9)

The procession again moved to the feasting place, singing, even dancing, with all the food they would need, pots, baskets, mortars, and so on. Everybody sang, e.g., *iiyimbo yoohango* (Ndonga), *oshiimbo shefundula* (songs for omufundula), *oshiimbo shefundula loomeme* (for mothers and other women) and *oshiimbo shefundula loshilumenhu* (for men)

[39] This was told by Saarti Lukeniko, of the Ngandjera ohango.
[40] *Namibian Sun*, 2012-08-23
[41] Nampala & Shigwedha, 2006, p. 40.

at efundula. One can just imagine the sound of these hundreds of voices, ululation and instruments in the olden days! When they entered the namunganga's house they put their baskets aside and went to the oshana (oluanene) where the singing and dancing began. In Ombalanhu this day is called *olweenene* after the testing of aafuko that takes place at the oshana where they must sing and dance (*uudhano yolufuko*) to the beating of etemo in the sun all day without tiring (see paragraph above on tests). The other women, aatsali, could dance any uudhano but when they returned to namunganga's house they sang *ohale.* This was in praise of family and themselves. After energetic singing and dancing all day, the girls would be taken by namunganga to their sleeping place, which was a secure and secret place – unseen except by omupiithi. There the namunganga gave them olukwe ointment to apply. This consisted mainly of butterfat and red colouring herbs (melon or hazel seeds mixed with red wood flour) mixed together in a tortoiseshell. Their metal bracelets and clothing were removed. Mothers clothed their daughters in the initiation bridal dress of elapi and ongodhi (plaited palm leaves) along with a string of ostrich shell beads (*omihanga)*.

These secret shelters, *etsali,*[42] or *ondjuo* (Kwanyama) were loosely constructed from leafy branches by namunganga and assistants and would be destroyed by burning after the ceremony. It is the roof of such a shelter that would cover an omufuko who died there or was burnt for having been pregnant. Sometimes apparently, five or six aafuko would inhabit a shelter, at others a single girl to a shelter. Once they moved to etsali, the girls were nearly naked and were not allowed to emerge without a blanket pulled up over their heads.

The third day *(ekoteko)* in Uukwambi, or *okambadjona* elsewhere, would be for singing and playing ekoteko by mothers and chaperones, not brides. Brides remained at etsali where they were fed herb-treated omahangu porridge and underwent instruction, the exact nature of which is unknown (secret). It is here too that aafuko were made to drink special beer that was stirred by namunganga's penis, according to some writers. This may have been something used by church elders to damn the ceremony, however. I was also told that to leave the hut aafuko had to crawl through the legs of the standing namunganga. In Angolan efundula this is apparently not so, but according to my informants this did happen and was excruciatingly embarrassing for a young woman, yet most probably considered important in ensuring fertility. Even in middle age one woman still covered her face in telling of this experience. In Oukwanyama this third day is called *ombadjeyakula* (big jackal). It is the day on which, after dancing all day in the sun, brides are anointed and their young "best men" enter the passage at the cattle enclosure to lead the

[42] Omatsali singular.

brides out, their faces covered. Potential bridegrooms and fathers came to the ceremonial area and performed for the aafuko with oontanto songs and dances.

On their return after three days in Ombalanhu, Ngandjera brides would go to the Ngandjera namunganga's homestead to meet up with their parents and stay overnight. This is a very important day to them. Cattle are slaughtered. This day is called *omayolo* (omawoolo).

On the fourth day in Oukwanyama and Uukwambi there would be more singing and dancing and that night there would be no sleep.[43] This day is called *okambadjona* (Kwambi) or *omuuhalo* ("a day for spending", Kwanyama). If all goes well, the brides would emerge on the fourth day. On this day they would have to pass through the symbolic door, leaving girlhood and entering womanhood. They would parade at the feasting place and prospective grooms could present them with a woven bracelet or ring, which the bride could either accept, indicating a commitment, or refuse by tossing it down on the ground. The prospective groom who is accepted would still be expected to approach her parents afterwards to ask for her hand in marriage. On the final day the fathers would arrive with bows and arrows, playing okutanha. Further celebration and feasting would take place.

The fourth day for Ngandjera girls is the day the brides go home and their parents again perform a ceremonial slaughter of cattle and have a ceremony called o*mayomboloko.* After the fourth day Kwanyama brides were painted with white ash from the omukuku wood and dressed as oihanangolo.

The final phase of olufuko plays out at the home place of each omufuko. It was described to me as the most important phase of all, although I do not see how a bride would get there without passing the tests of the middle phase.

In Ongandjera the fifth day is the day the bride, now at home, comes out. It's called *(ohango) ayilala.* Two baskets of omahangu are ceremonially placed at omufuko's feet (she sits there cross-legged) in a ceremony called *emembe sila.* She then presents one full basket of flour to the father's relative (sheenkadhi). The men would have brought the meat to oshoto and the cooking starts. They prepare a meal of chicken and spinach. Only the omufuko eats this special dish. Then they take a tortoise shell full of olukwe ointment and her father's sheenkadhi anoints her. People shout *"Inda na tsa yo ndjamba !"* After honouring her father's family the bride repeats the same process to her mother's family with a basket of flour. After the meal the *onguwo* (bridal dress) is ceremonially removed (to remove the dress is *okukulula).* Then the women start playing ekoteko, but omufuko

[43] According to Pastor *Amukutuwa*, personal interview, 2000.

does not join in. After this performance, relatives from the grandfather's side are given the back of the cow (spine), and one shoulder is given to the mother's side of the family. They are the people who brought the two baskets of omahangu. If all this is not done the omufuko would apparently not get a husband, but with the ceremony having been completed the omufuko may get married anytime. *Ekulula* is the ceremony which finally frees the omufuko to marry. In Uukwambi the fifth day of olufuko is called *ombepu,* and in Ombalanhu *epitoletando.* Each omufuko is given a small boy ("best man") to act the role of fiancé unless she already has a fiancé, because it is taboo to leave without accepting or refusing a marriage proposal. It is the day when the omufuko parades around the homestead at sunset on the arm of the young boy (under thirteen) assigned to her as a surrogate groom[44].

The sixth day, *omatselu,* refers to the slaughtering of the cattle in Uukwambi. The final ceremony after ohango – *oshinkono* (Kwaluudhi), *ondjibulula onene* (Mbalanhu) – involves the ceremonial removal of the bridal wear and hair (*ekululo)*, after which she may go to the groom's home. In Ongandjera the sixth day involves some celebrating of omufuko and her friends and relatives, and they eat *onguta.* Then the guests return to their own homes.

On the seventh day (*ethulo)* in Uukwambi, the skin of the slaughtered bovine would be put into water. The ceremonial hair of omufuko would be cut off and her bridal clothing removed. Here as well ceremonial removal of omufuko's dress and her final anointment with the special ointment (olukwe) is okukulula. Fathers like to play *okutanha* at the end of ohango during *omawoolo.* People shout and ululate, spears are shaken in front of the bride and the men leap and shout as they perform. Guests would depart after this, returning to their homes. In Oukwanyama one would say "*Efundula lahanauka";* the wedding ceremony has been completed. The final stage in Ombalanhu comes when the girls get home, where beer has been prepared. Someone announces the omufuko's return and welcomes her back. One of the older women places the long *endja* strings of beads on her – one on the right side from father's family and one on the left from mother's side. When the omufuko eventually has a baby she will give some of these beads to the baby. Then the aafuko visit one another's homes. They retain their bridal clothes during this period. Only when they finally return home (*okayo,* derived from okashuto) are they ceremonially anointed with *olukula.*

It is entirely possible, probably likely, that there are several inaccuracies in the description of the days described above, especially since names appear to overlap on different days. This may be as a result of failing memory of elderly participants, or more likely, as

[44] I did not ascertain the vernacular name of these boys, nor is the meaning truly clear.

a result of differences in different areas and seasons. What comes out clearly, however, are the typical three phases of: selection, getting ready and travelling; the ohango /olufuko itself with its special programme; followed by the return and welcome home of brides with a ceremonial slaughter of cattle and removal of bridal wear. Some aafuko already have a fiancé or promised man when going for olufuko. A symbolic palm leaf (or ring woven from palm leaf in Oukwanyama) is given by the man to the bride. I was told that aafuko generally stayed home for a further year before actually moving to the man's home, but that it was possible to leave with the preferred man after ekulula. Presumably this would have much to do with the age of the omufuko.

Modern Ohango

Nowadays, all ordinary weddings are called ohango, meaning that the formal ceremony takes place in a church, and that the wedding is legal in the eyes of the law, with all its implications. I attended ohango in Oukwanyama a few years ago, in what was a combination of old and new. Since I was a guest at the bride's home I cannot report on the events at the groom's home, but was told that the pre-wedding ceremonies were very similar.

After a long drive from Windhoek, my son Keiran and I arrived at the bride's home in Onangali in the late afternoon. Already there were many guests. Despite the spaciousness of the typical many-roomed homestead of Aawambo, the place was becoming crowded. People were getting their places ready not only inside the rooms, but also making beds outside the rooms against the walls. There was a lot of food running around – mainly chickens and goats. Our sleeping room was becoming filled with gifts to the bride, stacked up to the roof against one wall next to our sleeping bags on the floor. She locked us in there to protect the gifts and my recording equipment, so we used the open window for entry and exit, which seemed to work just fine. The bride was rushing around organising matters, her long slender legs gleaming in her denim shorts. Then we were called. One of the ceremonies was taking place at her mother's oshoto. We entered and noticed several beer pots arranged in the centre of the space. The bride sat on a chair against the palisade wall. Then the mothers (oomeme) entered with joyous ululating, waving their cow tail switches. One performed a praise (elitanga) to the bride, and others chorused agreement. A ladle of beer was drawn from one of the pots, poured into the special wooden ceremonial cup and given to the bride to drink. This was passed around relatives to sip. More was taken. Then the ritual of presenting traditional ceremonial bridal wear was done, with this modern educated young woman donning a dark blue cotton dress over her shorts and T-shirt, her mother wrapping the head cloth around her curler covered hair.

A little distance away from the house, three selected heifers were being slaughtered, as well as several chickens. This was prepared as food for the guests. The heifers had a symbolic significance and their innards were inspected for signs of a happy and fertile future before being cut up into meat portions.

That night after dinner for all the house guests, which by now numbered about a hundred, there was to be much celebration in a blend of religious and older customs. Proceedings began with a candle-lit outdoor reading from the Bible, punctuated by the singing of hymns mainly by the men. The bride was seated at the central table and given what looked like a stern sermon by her father and other elder men. In the distance I could hear a rhythmic whistling on several ohiya begin, drawing closer. As their ululating and whistling drew closer the men began to sing with more urgency, but remained very serious. The women and young girls arrived with boisterous singing, dancing, harmonicas and whistles. I could hear snatches of traditional songs through the wuu wuu-wuu wuuu of the ohiya. As the men turned their singing up another notch, the women moved off with non-stop dancing and rhythm, overpinned by ligola. To me the most unusual element of this was that the men and women remained with their separate performances of music throughout the night – women in a flowing form of uudhano and men in an un-

Fig. 4.13: Makende celebrating the eve of ohango with libatory beer

Fig. 4.14: Moving towards the bridal car

Figs. 4.15 and 4.16: The two singing groups of the departing procession (video shots)

broken continuation of hymns from their hymnals. When one considers the traditional ohango, this makes sense since men and women were separate in their contributions to the event. In the early morning hours just before dawn, everything quietened down as people quickly grabbed a brief shuteye before the main events.

Later that morning Makende (the bride) came to fetch me to observe the final beauty preparations which were happening at a house of her aunt who was also maid of honour. After the hair, nail and facial make-up preparations and discussions about the wedding we returned to Makende's home for a light lunch and a short rest in the heat. Then the beautiful bride, dressed in her bridal finery paid a last visit to her mother's oshoto for blessings and photographs.

We then dressed and made our way to the church by pickup truck in the early afternoon. Keiran, my son, was carrying the large keyboard on which I was to play the wedding march. We settled into our spot in the front of the church which was fast filling up. Notably, there were no uukorasa sung at the door to the church, possibly because of the keyboard music I was asked to provide. During the service, however, the congregation did sing hymns. The wedding ceremony proceeded much like any other Christian wedding, followed by the couple being congratulated by all the attendees. Thereafter the procession to the vehicles set off on foot – a long slow procession, since it is important at this point not to seem in too much of a hurry to reach home, as that would be in bad taste.

In front were the women and youth, singing, dancing and blowing whistles and harmonicas. Then came the bridal pair with some of their entourage, followed finally by the men, still singing hymns from their songbooks - all at the same time. In Shiweda's[45]

[45] N. T. Shiweda, 2002.

Fig. 4.17: Family groups approaching each other

words: "the men sing religious songs and walk sedately, thereby gaining God's blessing, and women and children sing and dance joyfully in front of the couple, smoothing their future path together".

Again, the carry-over from earlier customs surfaced in the women's joyful ululating, singing and dancing, reminiscent of aafuko coming out on completion of olufuko. While the men's rather doleful singing provided a counterpoint that reminded me of the religious disapproval of the "wild and primitive" dances that so seemed to concern the missionaries. The dances of the women brought to mind a connection to the returning procession on completion of olufuko.

On arrival at the bride's parental home, these roles took on a different texture. Through the melee of the throng of people, it became clear that the two family parties had separated and were approaching the home from two different directions. Again, women taking on the role of aatsali approached first, dressed in colours chosen for the bride's side and the groom's side. But just behind them were the fathers who brandished their traditional weapons and shouted the calls of "hango woo, hango woo!" as a form of okutanha.

The two parties faced one another over a clear area and several things were shouted that we could not make out. It did not look friendly, but then the customary welcome was shouted to the groom's family and everyone slowly proceeded towards the area where gifts were to be presented. Bringing up the rear and interspersed among the guests were

young men with tin cans tied around their legs, performing prodigious leaps into the air. They were partly ignored by elders while the youngsters found them highly entertaining.

After a few speeches by important guests, gifts were presented to the couple with the appropriate well wishes. Included were several of the traditional clay pots given as gifts at olufuko. The final stage of this, the main day of the wedding, was a lush buffet dinner in a marquee and dancing to popular recorded music. The following day, the bride proceeded for the first time to the home of the bridegroom, where there was more feasting and finally the departure of guests.

It must be said that this description might not be apt for all modern day weddings, since the bride especially wanted several traditional elements incorporated into her wedding. Also, as a professional person, she was in the privileged position of being able to afford a large wedding. Nevertheless, to an outsider the evolving of new from old was clear, even when there existed a resolve to bring the new back into touch with the old. Weddings remain the clearest way in which to attempt such a movement through time in this region.

5 Moonlight Play: Teaching Old, Developing New

(with comment by Trixie Munyama)

I am sitting on a large overturned can, preparing my video equipment. I am waiting for the children outside the palisades at meme Esther's place at Uukwamatsi, Ongandjera in 1999. It is late harvest (cool dry) season, and the late afternoon sun is pleasant on my back. While the breeze rustles gently through the dry mahangu stalks, the children are organizing themselves to play *uudhano.* They have finished their daytime chores (it is the school winter holidays) and after this playing, the girls will go to *kepata* where they will prepare the evening *oshifima* (omahangu porridge). The girls here do the cooking and the adult women relax. Some evenings I cook and share my food, other evenings we share theirs.

But now I am becoming impatient for them to begin. First they have to decide the order and placement of each person in the circle. This indicates who begins and who ends the song-play. It also denotes their levels of expertise. After deciding who will play the overturned plastic 25 litre water container as drum, they begin clapping. I press record and sit back to enjoy, before focusing on special details.

Fig. 5.1: Cooking dinner in Uukwamatsi. The pot on the fire contains porridge cooked from omahangu meal.

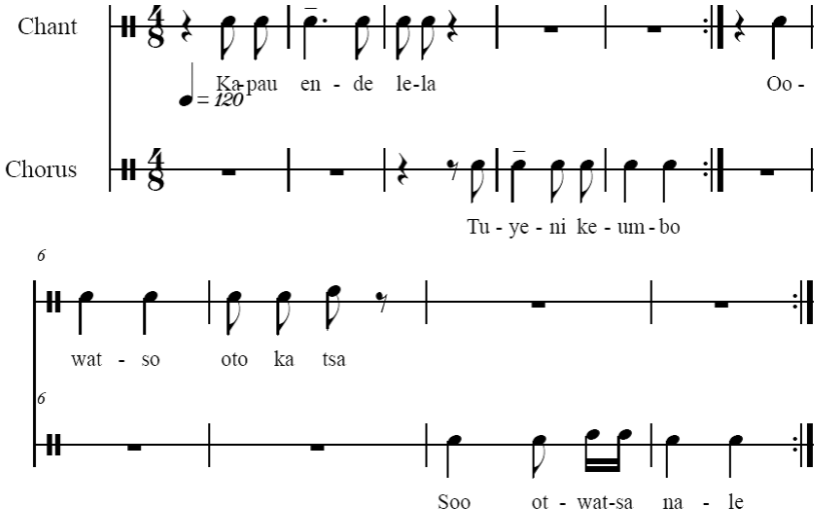

Fig. 5.2: Rhythmic pattern of stone-passing game

The first one in the ring is a girl of eleven years whose lower leg was lost in a landmine explosion. She wears a prosthesis, but because her dance – which is really rather good – is different, she performs alone. Then come the small boys (Kamati, five and Angula, seven years), then the smaller girls Vaina, Linia, Rosalia and older boy (Ananias), and finally teenage girls (Esther and Loini) who finish off the play with panache.

After another three songs, they reluctantly announce they have to go inside. I'm reluctant for it to end as well, but very happy because of their songs. I pack up and take things to our sleeping place. My student assistants Esther and Aina accompany me, talking and laughing about amusing details they spotted. Later we will have a beer, food and discuss the day's work. After a week of living here, the children have lost their awe and fear of my white skin, and are happy to play with my hair, or go about their everyday business without taking any special notice of us. I am happy that they do not associate me with enemy soldiers anymore.

At a different home, a different year, I noticed children playing a stone-passing game while chanting rhythmically. The rhythm was compelling and I watched until I had memorized the text. The game went like this: Children were seated facing inwards, each with a stone in the right hand. The leader chanted "*Kapau endelela*" (Kapau hurry up) and the chorus responded "*Tu yeni keumbo*" (go home) while players tapped the stones on the ground. Then, in the second phase, as the leader chanted "*Oowa tso oto ka tsa*" (go and pound the omahangu) and they responded "*So otwa tsa nale*" stones were passed to the

children on the right sides (the child took the stone from the child on the left, with the left hand, and passed to the right). Thus the passing and receiving happened simultaneously on one beat, and the exchange on the next beat. If someone was slow and ended up with more than one stone when phase one began again, that child was out and the game continued. This was a game requiring dexterity and rhythmic precision that amazed me at their age. The words are in Oshikwambi (Oshindonga). The rhythmic pattern can be seen in the notation in Fig. 5.2.

Playing

Perhaps the most common form of all musical practice in the Aawambo culture is referred to as playing. The generic term for playing in all the Oshiwambo dialects is similar – *uudhano, ouvano* or *oudano.*[1] The terms *okudhana (dhana* is play) or *okudanauka,*[2] mean to play or dance. "Players" are *omudhana* or *aadhana* (pl.). The act of musical playing is common all over the northern regions, and in all the towns where there is a large enough population of Aawambo to make good playing viable. Indeed, at any and every national cultural festival, or as a welcome for high-ranking guests, *uudhano* is most probably on the event programme!

While the term *uudhano* is used for adult play as well as that of children, the formats differ in many respects and *the structure of both the dance and the song is dictated by circumstance, type and age group.* This chapter looks at the play – singing, drumming and dance with an element of play – of young girls and women. This playing infers:

- music (singing or *eimbilo*) and drumming (*okudhenga eengoma)*,
- bodily action (clapping hands or *okudhenga omake kumwe* or *okuhakela)*
- dance (*dhana)*
- and rules of play, thus order, standards, with fun and surprise.

Both men and women might play, but the nature of traditional society has resulted in it being a more common pursuit for women than for men. As a result, men tend to use specific occasion-related terms for their play. Women's and children's iidhano have songs and dances structured differently each according to the occasion, the age group, and the type of play.

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1 In this chapter the term uudhano will be used, except where a regional difference needs to be explained in the correct dialect.

2 The prefix oku- indicates the active form "to".

Fig. 5.3: Small ongoma (okangoma) (video shot)

Women's *iidhano* [3] are also guided by circumstance, and most of the occasions I have recorded have come about as a result of me asking to see it. The circumstances were therefore artificial. But on all occasions, after a slow start, the inherent playing nature of the uudhano took over and women sang, danced, clapped, laughed and had fun as though they themselves had decided to play. Sometimes I filmed a cultural group who performed together for special occasions. At other times and places, a whole village would gather and play. Always, everyone knew the rules and structure of the performance, although they didn't always know the same songs or song lyrics. This has led me to believe that the dance-play with its characteristic rhythms, actions and rules is more durable over a period of time than are the songs, which are frequently newly composed or re-texted.

Each time I visited the northern regions on research trips, I encountered different forms of iidhano. Yet, it wasn't long before certain consistencies became clear. For instance, all the children's iidhano I encountered included drums. Women's play did not make any use of drums. Those used by children could simply be large water containers of plastic, or a small drum (*okangoma)* made of carved wood with a skin membrane. It would not be appropriate for children to play the large *eengoma* (plural) in their iidhano.

Social Circumstance

Because uudhano is so central as a form of entertainment in rural areas, each village has its own special place where uudhano is most commonly played.

Full moon has always been a major occasion for children's play – all over Africa. Adults and children might gather for such occasions, although children might play separately. One song children might sing at full moon in Ombalanhu is "*Omwevi wa toka nuulelekule*". Others might play *ekulo lyanaubwabwa.* Other song-dance games might also be played at full moon, e.g. *omupembe* (for young men) referred to in different forms as *omankandja* (Ngandjera) and *ombwiku* (Mbalanhu). One omupembe song is "*Naule wokakome*".

[3] Iidhano is the plural form in Oshindonga.

In Ombalanhu the gathering of people is at *omukwa,* the special big baobab tree. There the play includes adults as well as youngsters, although joining in is in any case open to those who want to join – men, women, youth, children. Children are taught there by elders who call them. They perform, learning by imitation while elders clap. Uudhano is commonly performed at *oshana* in other areas.

Uudhano makes a political statement. Seen from the point of view of cultural insiders, it celebrates the armed struggle and the PLAN. Seen from an outsider point of view, it illustrates cultural identity (clearly Aawambo) and connections with SWAPO. This was accentuated in the PLAN camps and communities during the struggle, where casual social performances took place, but cultural troupes were created to carry forth the message of the struggle. The Young Pioneers – groups of youngsters who performed during the struggle – are an example.

As Trixie Munyama recalls:

> The Young Pioneers groups were created by the Cultural division of the liberation struggle elders as a way to keep the cultural songs and dances alive and impart these skills to the "children of the liberation struggle". To instill in us our cultural values/practices and remind us of where we came from even if we have never been to Namibia, the camps were seen as a transit point for our return. Every activity in the camp was made to prepare us for our lives back home.
>
> In letters my late father left me, he writes how he, my mother, and other teenagers left their school (Martin Luther High School in Otjimbingwe) one early morning during the mid-1970s to contribute, somehow, to the liberation movement and towards the emancipation of Namibia from the colonial regime. They trekked by road and on foot to the movement's Zambian camp, Nyango, where I was born. They spent four years there before they were separated to further their studies in Ireland and Egypt on instruction from SWAPO.
>
> My earliest memory and from where everything unravels in my life, begins with me, opening my eyes and staring at the moon as a shadow amongst jungle trees, I am lying down and the jerking movements of the army truck rocks me back to sleep. We are on our way to Kwanza Sul where I will spend the next six years as a child of SWAPO, separated from my parents, a number on countless lists, wandering into the jungle surrounding the camp and finding my freedom as Captain of the Young Pioneers Dance Group.
>
> Most of the songs and dances we played as Pioneers were of a political nature; giving praises to the SWAPO leaders in the struggle and songs of victory and defeat over the enemy. I suppose these were created to keep us optimistic to the ultimate goal: an independent Namibia.
>
> We danced for visiting dignitaries, and for ourselves and the community. Once a month at full moon, the young women of the camp would gather and tell stories of home and in the darkness at the edge of the jungle, they would beat the drum, echoes of ancestral rhythmic

> patterns (similar to Efundula) brought about a stillness, a reverence for this gathering, I remember. Here is where they taught us song dances, not purposefully, I think, but quite incidentally. As we watched, imitated and played, we were no longer in a war.
>
> While I can't remember actual songs we sang, the ones quoted below are typical.
> During the struggle and after, there have been many intercultural exchanges around and adaptations in children's iidhano. Some of these occurred by meeting up with members of other liberation groups. Other changes occur naturally over time, as children meet and play with others at school, at cultural festivals, and via television. The term uudhano is thus a generic term used for all kinds of music-dance play. In schools these days it is in some cases being overtaken by songs from other parts of the world, many taken from gospel music and European "school songs".

From this personal account by Munyama, one can see that music and dance were important components of the liberation struggle – as identity confirmation and also as a form of decolonization of the mind. Most probably these texts, in previous times, were different and about everyday mundane topics.

Children's uudhano types are named according to the occasions where they happen. For example, they can play *osamangela* (a type associated with a particular song that apparently comes from Angola, using specific limping leg movements); full moon entertainment; *omungolo* (boys and girls); *aitana olyelye tei pe nge yo* (game for girls and boys); *omatutula* (foot-stamping actions for girls); *engolo* (actions for boys). In Ombalanhu people speak of *ino shi* for a children's group playing *ouvano* [4] (uudhano).

So what are the common characteristics of childrens uudhano? There is always clapping of hands, stamping of feet, dancing patterns, singing, characteristics of playing, defined social circumstances, and often – drumming.

In general, uudhano includes clapping of hands in a specific pattern that matches the song. Clapping is *eempi* in Oshingandjera. It is expected that clapping should be correct and performed with energy, because it encourages and guides the players. It provides the impetus for maintaining the energetic dance. The most typical clapping pattern I encountered amongst children was (Fig. 5.4):

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
1 X		X		X		X		X		X	
2 X		X		X		X		X		X	
3 X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	

[4] The term used in Ombalanhu.

4 X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
5 X		X	X	X		X	X	X		X	X
6 X	X		X	X		X	X		X	X	
7 X	X			X		X		X		X	
8 X	X			X	X	X					
9 X					X	X			X	X	
10 X						X			X	X	
11 X						X			X	X	
12 X						X			X	X	
Small variations may occur. First 2 lines are an introduction. Pattern repeated until all dancers have taken a turn.											

Fig. 5.4: Children's uudhano clapping pattern

From the clapping diagram one can clearly see that it is a long and extensive pattern. It is made up of 2 x 6 (=12) pulses in each row,[5] often for 12 rows (phrases). Sometimes these are arranged in twos (3 x 2) as in rows 1 and 2 (two blocks, two blocks, two blocks). Others, e.g. rows 5 and 6 are in threes (2 x 3, three blocks, three blocks). This not only gives the music a nice rhythmic complexity, but allows dancers to perform different physical emphases to match the rhythms.

Clapping is accompanied by stamping of feet – *okututulo nomuthindo* (Mbalanhu) which means stamping with effort, or just *emthindo* (Ngandjera). The energy direction of the stamp is *into* the ground in a pattern that usually duplicates the clapping and the drumming.

While drumming is uncommon in adult women's uudhano, it is necessary for children's play and only absent when there is no drum or person who can drum. The drum is not beaten in a mere metric count, but is played in the same rhythmic pattern as the clapping and later the foot-stamping. Where the clapping pattern in rows 1 and 2 has 6 beats, the drum would double this up with more rapid pulses, i.e. 12. (See notation for "Amuwa" at the rear of this book)

Importantly, there is singing because the singing has purpose and meaning. Songs are usually begun by a strong singer, and then taken up by the rest. It is not normally a re-

[5] One counts empty blocks as well as X blocks to reach 12.

sponsorial song. Children sing together, either in unison or a second group sings parallel with the first, but a third higher (*ondaka ondeka)* or lower (*ondaka ofupi)*.

Each type of uudhano has its own repertoire of songs and forms that involve different but related rhythmic patterns and movements. The song texts for many of the songs reflect incidents remembered from the armed struggle for independence and developments that related to it. In Omahale I asked Sara about the meaning of the songs to her and her friends.

"They're just playing," she said.

"But the words are about the war – before you were born. Why do you still sing those words?" I asked.

"It's what we heard and learnt," she said. "Everyone sings them." She sat examining her finger nails as we sat in the last rays of the setting sun, on the steps of their home. Then she added: "Maybe also because we should remember them. The war is our history. We mustn't forget."

"Do you know iidhano songs that aren't about the Struggle?"

"Maybe … I can't think now. But I think there are…"

To me it seems that many of these play song types existed a long time ago, but that their lyrics undergo continuous adaptation. Hence, old songs were most likely play songs that were adapted during the Struggle so as to educate, inspire loyalty, and reflect the circumstances of war and political ideals (see Munyama's comments). Below are examples.

Song 1.

Ovila-oneene	Bird/plane big
Nelombe Nelombe Nelombee	Nelombe
Ta nyanda ta nyanda	is dancing, dancing
Twe i palela okapale okapale.	We made space, space

Meaning:
The airplane (Nelombe is a praise name for a plane) is taxiing and we have made space for it – a landing strip.

Song 2.

Manga Botha	While Botha is walking limping
a li yende tali shongola	
Manga Opulana	While PLAN is walking straight
a li yende ya ukilila	
Opo tu shiwe tu ninge	So that we are able to do
Osamangela uu sa	Osamangela
Aha!	

Meaning:
While the SA Defence Force of Botha is struggling
And the Peoples' Liberation Army of Namibia is strong
We can dance mangela (sounds) uu sa
aha.

As one can see, the texts are sometimes sketchy, which is typical of children's rhythmic play songs in other parts of the world as well. Small snippets of daily events or news are picked up by children and turn in their minds as they play, eventually becoming transformed into verse. Often the meanings can only be properly understood by somebody who knows the context and environments. Thus, many songs give thanks to a person they know for something they have received, or mention heroes or specific dates such as Independence (21 March 1990). For a complete Independence song transcription (*Omutwendi-one yaMaalitsa)*, see Chapter 9 – Songs.

In the song about playing *osamangela,* the nonsense syllables "uu saa aha" are choreographed by each different dancer as a contraction and pose on each syllable. These are often meant to be funny (sticking out a hip too far, extending the pelvis sharply, or sticking out the buttocks) thereby making fun of the Botha forces in a roundabout way. One of the basic movements in this song is the swinging of the knees in and out in opposite directions, ending on a pelvic contraction on the last note.[6] These knee swings symbolise the "limping walk" of the enemy forces.

Structure

Uudhano is play, and play always has certain characteristics, such as competition, surprise, humour, order, rules, and so on.[7] To play the dance, children take turns – usually in a specific order – sometimes solo or in pairs or threes.

It begins like this: The girls (and less often boys) gather around in a circle or semi-circle, facing inwards. Often they are arranged from smallest to tallest or eldest. Generally, after some arguing about who is going to do what and what they are going to sing, one person (*omukomesho* or *omutoloki)* starts a song, or the drummer begins the correct rhythm for the song. If it is good, the others take up the song. Mostly, I found that the children sing through the entire song at least once – to get the feel of it – before beginning to play.

Now the youngest pair may enter the space in the centre and begin to perform the starting stamps. Each phase of the dance is typically done twice. As they perform, the

6 The songs mentioned here were recorded by M. Mans in 2000 in the Ombalanu area as ouvano.
7 See Mans, 2002b, for a full description of play.

Fig. 5.5: Leg movement component in uudhano.

Fig. 5.6: Girls in Omahale village, Ombalanhu. Saara's body in "basic earth" position with leg lifted

children try to mirror or balance each other's movements and synchronize their movements to occur at the same time. That is considered better than each person just doing her/his own. As they go through the intricate rhythmic patterns, [8] dancers begin to add their own flair and experience. The ending of the verse and the exit of the pair of dancers happen simultaneously, with the dancers giving some saucy kind of "goodbye" movement before returning to their places in the circle. The song is repeated and the next pair enters, and so on, until the most experienced dancers enter, show off their skills to everyone's delight, and that set is finished.

Ending a set or song, as children often do, with the best dancers last inspires the younger ones without placing them directly into competition with those who are older. The challenge for the dancers is to follow the rhythm accurately, match or mirror the other's movements, add extra tastiness and flair to the movements, and to end the sequence with stylish flair.

The movements for *uudhano* w*aanona* (children) are very energetic, giving truth to the African value of the celebration of Life Force energy and the value of ephebism.[9] Thus their stamps are quick and strong, with lower leg lifts after each stamp. The body is held in a position of balance (basic earth[10]) with arms partially extended. Turns are quick and often in the air, and movements contrast quickness with sudden halts and poses. The girls challenge one another in quick, sharp movements of lower legs and arms, and often in the sharp contraction of the pelvis. The energy that is put into the foot stamps (*emuthindo)* and the leg lifts are important for the quality of the dance and dancer, as is the energy of the clapping (*okuhakela* – to clap). A further popular component of the dance is the raising of lower leg, swivelling outwards from the knee and brushing ground, as can be seen in Fig. 5.5.

It's important to note that not only children play. Adults do as well. It is especially adult women's different forms of uudhano that appeal to me. Again, different areas have slightly different forms and appear to prefer certain typical rhythmic patterns.

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8 Changing from combinations of twos to threes and back, e.g. xx/ xx/ xx xx xx which adds up to 2 sets of 6, but arranged in threes and twos.

9 By contrast, the value of age is celebrated by bringing "coolness" of movements in other dances, e.g. adult women's uudhano.

10 See Mans, 1997, for a detailed explanation. Basically the upper body is inclined forwards from the hips, knees are bent while feet are securely placed flat on the ground.

Women's Moonlight or Entertainment Play

One of the first things I noticed when watching adult women play, is that there are differences between the playing that occurs at an oshana or beer drinking place, from that which women rehearse and perform for special occasions. The latter usually involves special clothing and ankle rattles, and in my experiences, seldom involves eengoma (drums). The percussion of foot stamps is clear and takes the place of a drum. The casual uudhano played at an oshana or a cuca shop somehow often manages to combine the qualities of children's uudhano and oomemes' uudhano by being less formally organised and, often, more outgoing and playful. There are other forms of play, such as *onghenda ayogolola* which is a song-play where a partner is picked and flirted with. Men and women perform this together. Indeed, women may also approach a man in this dance.

Apart from regular viewing on Namibian television, my personal encounters with the different forms of adult uudhano took place mainly in Ombalanhu, Ongandjera and Oukwanyama. I began in Outapi, where Chief Oswin Mukulu had arranged for us to meet with the best known local women's cultural dance group. After talking and filming for a few hours, the ladies invited me to join them. I didn't need a second invitation!

First, after having recorded for about half an hour, one of the women invited me to the changing room where she dressed me in a skirt, belt, and necklace. I had to have the right tools to dance. Then I was joined with one pair who were to instruct me. We waited our turn. And then just before we had to begin, she stuck a whistle (ohiya) in my mouth and I had to blow the rhythm as well as imitate the dance, and follow the rhythm with my feet! Off we went, me struggling to perform the correct actions with feet, hands and hips while blowing and waving the cow tail – all at once. I tried and even though everyone was rolling with laughter at my attempt, they were happy that I had tried. Maybe I showed some promise, because I got a few more turns – every time with a new song and new rhythm. And then – the doyenne of the dance, Kuku Malyana Naundjoba, the one who was the snappiest (and oldest) dancer there, took my hand and invited me to dance with her! I was terrified. But once again, she held my hand to make sure I had the rhythm and knew when to start, and we set off. By now I had some confidence and got into things by playing. I accepted her

Fig. 5.7: Learning to play ouvano in Ombalanhu (video shot).

challenge and did my best to keep up and even shine a little myself. It was such fun! Everyone screamed with laughter. I received hugs all round and Malyana Naundjoba waved my hand in the air like a boxer who has won a fight. I felt this meant that my dancing – amateurish and struggling at best, but keen – was found acceptable. This was praised by a song they sang addressed to me and I was overcome by emotion.

After this, the more serious songs and dances were continued by this accomplished group who shared with me so kindly. It was largely this encounter that inspired me to share through this book, with others.

The lyrics of women's songs often contain playful reminders of more serious matters in society. For example, they might sing about the bad behaviour of boys (or girls), or conversely, might sing about how boys can "come together" with their girlfriends. Some songs welcome people to their community, other criticise people, or they very commonly praise their traditional or political leaders. The song "Iyoye wei yoye" at the rear of this book seems to be a long lamentation of bad luck happening to a woman, but then warns a man not to go back to his prostitutes. This appears to refer to a man (husband) who visits prostitutes while away working. The person then refers to an aircraft spying on the people, counting farm stock. It ends with the comment that her shoes are lying outside in the rain, perhaps implying that she herself is a careless woman?

The structure of the adult dance is somewhat similar to that of the girls, in that women also gather in a circle and take turns to perform. In my experience, the order normally ends with the best performers. The sequences and rhythmic patterns, however, tend to be far shorter, as can be seen below. In fact, the entire dance for a song normally has one rhythm pattern (short or longer) that repeats throughout, whereas the rhythms of the children's iidhano described above vary in emphases. By that I mean that, if one was to count every beat as containing either two or three smaller beats (pulses), then children's uudhano shows more complexity in such rhythmic variation than that of older women.

Fig. 5.8 gives the rhythmic pattern of "*Tanyanda*", a song recorded in Ongandjera and Ombalanhu. It consists of a pattern of 8 pulses.

Introduction (clapping – eempi)

x		x		x		x		x		x		x	x	x	

or

x		x		x		x		x		x					

The dance begins, eempi and stamping (emthindo), the sequence done twice by every dancer.

x	x	x		x	x	x	
x	x	x	x	x	x	x	
x	x	x		x	x	x	
x		x				x	x
x						(x)	

Fig. 5.8: A women's uudhano clapping pattern

A different pattern (Fig. 5.9) was also quite commonly encountered, and was organised in 12 pulses.

Introduction, repeated 4 or more times, until all are ready, eempi.

x		x		x		x			x	x	

Dance begins, eempi and emthindo, twice for every dancer.

x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	
x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	
x		x		x		x		x		x	
x	x		x	x		x	x		x	x	
x		x		x		x		x		x	
x	x					x		x		x	
x	x										

The blank squares' time is used to walk back to position in the circle

Fig. 5.9: Alternative women's uudhano clapping pattern

Women performing in traditional attire might wear ankle rattles *(oishakiti)* to enhance the sound of their stamping feet, and blow whistles *(ohiya)* rhythmically to generate more energy and excitement. Good or experienced dancers wave a whisk made from the tail of bovine (cow) or gnu.

Fig. 5.10: One of the older forms of Mbalanhu traditional clothing

The foot-ground relation of women's play involves movements that show a downward force, into the earth, with small gaps between the feet and the ground except at the sequence end. Feet are stamped and then swept across the ground. The upper body of older women, understandably, is kept relatively immobile, but the dance may still include turning leaps at the end of a sequence. Kuku Malyana Naundjoba, who dances with a very upright back, told me that older women should keep their torsos upright and not allow their breasts to jiggle as this would be unseemly. Youthful dancing shows less contact with the ground, more leaps, kicks and higher lifts of legs.

Repeated components that characterize these dances include (i) double and/or alternating foot stamps moving out, (ii) leaping turns with flexed feet lifted and the elevation at about 30 cm (iii) lunges at corner points and (iv) *okumhenuna* – to throw hips/skirt or to sway the hips. In terms of how it is done, *okututula nomuthindo* (to stamp with energy) is important to the aesthetic of the dance. Similarly, to add a shrugging of shoulders to the stamping actions, and demonstrating "attitude" is good! *Okutumba komapepe* is to shrug or use shoulders.

The use of space in most iidhano is quite generous, unless groups rehearse to practice in a small space. Traditionally, however, at the oshana, there is an abundance of space to be used as wished, within the confines of the circle of onlookers. The use of space is commensurate with age-related ephebism or coolness, in other words, older persons who dance with greater control and coolness tend to use less space. The movement sequences

Fig. 5.11: A more dated yet still used form of Ngandjera traditional wear

Fig. 5.12: The typical youthful effort is visible here

of the dances are performed in linear or circular shapes, depending on circumstance and personal choice in some cases.

The effort expended by older women demonstrates high energy, often with sudden, strong movement effort. The dances of the youth often exert extreme effort, many sudden and repeated sharp movements that may even result in a fall or loss of balance.

The social circumstances of women's play are mainly for entertainment, at times when there is something to celebrate or when there is full moon playing. This is not to imply that this social play is not important to society, as you shall see further on. As society develops technologically, the full moon playing is becoming increasingly rare, since there are now electric lights at homes, with television taking the place of self-made entertainment. In the past, especially at olufuko and efundula, the dancing of uudhano by different people was a core performance ingredient of the entire ceremony. The celebratory aspect took centre stage there. But iidhano in society can be seen on other "stages" in communities as well.

One hot Saturday afternoon in 1998 in Ongandjera, Japhet (son of my hostess) offered to take us to Onandjira, a village apparently known for having a larger than normal number of eenganga residents, and being "very traditional". Since I wondered what that meant, I was quite excited to see the place which we reached by many little winding tracks past dry oshanas. On arrival we were met by a small group of very suspicious men, wanting to know who we were and especially, what I was doing there. My perceived whiteness appeared to cause a certain amount of distrust, understandable in the light of the recent events of the border war. We got out, introduced ourselves and did some explaining, but the men were adamant that dancing or playing was not an open practice and that we should best be leaving. I looked around in frustration, because from the growing number of people gathering, I knew that uudhano would be played there like anywhere else in the region. The village clearly had a population of a few hundred. I caught a woman's eye, shrugged my shoulders and lifted my hands in a fairly universal sign for "what now?" To my delight, this young woman walked over and asked the senior onganga why we couldn't "make TV" of them, and as they tried to ignore her, she demanded to be heard and other women stepped up. Without the intention, we had started something here …

Feeling uncomfortable with all the shouting happening, I spoke and asked my assistants to explain that we were looking for materials and knowledge to include in Namibian arts curricula for schools. We were not making TV, nor were we trying to spy. I injudiciously mentioned that women who performed would be "compensated". The men

wanted an unheard of fee of a thousand dollars (without themselves performing), but the women gainsaid this and told us they would be happy to perform for some refreshments afterwards. We had a crowd.

Many great songs were recorded, and fun had with conversations, questions about the songs, recordings and our own attempts at dance, with Japhet hovering in the background. What struck me, however, was the social organisation of uudhano. This became evident not in the songs, clothing or dance, but in the way women were, or weren't, allowed to participate. For example, there was an older woman who kept trying to enter the dancing space and face the camera as she performed. Others kept ushering her away and asked me not to film her. She very clearly wanted to dance! In the end, she was physically taken away and I asked what the problem was – why couldn't she join in? I was told that she was "mentally not all there" and therefore not allowed to perform in this situation – where the village population's performance was being recorded. She should not be recorded as a representative of the village, in other words. Nor did any others join her in playing.

This showed me that even an informal gathering of people who were basically sharing their culture for the pleasure of a few refreshments afterwards, had rules that linked into their aesthetic system. Her dancing was "not real dancing", she just "messed around", and although she actually did perform the steps, she lacked the ability to abide by the rules of the play of uudhano and to respect the turns of others.

In Oukwandongo, next to the home of King Japhet of Ongandjera, women were performing iidhano and I was filming. Then the king's wife and her one daughter came to join the playing. Immediately the singing ratcheted up a gear – more intense, higher pitch, louder. The daughter performed with another young woman and showed that she was an excellent player, with "tasty" little movements and subtle details that I am still able to visualise. The queen, however, did not follow the common two-by-two pattern of performance. She danced, but always by herself. She brought that much desired "coolness" quality that good older dancers are expected to display. She demonstrated the required aesthetic benchmark, and others were inspired to improve their dancing as well. She demonstrated that being good at the dance was part of her leadership, and that her daughter was expected to show similar qualities. Those who were becoming rowdy after a few beers were asked to quieten down or leave. A dignified and kind woman who sent me home later with a large basket of fresh eefukwa. Delicious!

One could therefore say that iidhano are a fundamental statement of Aawambo identity, and could not correctly be performed publicly by somebody considered non-respresentative of the broader community or culture. By contrast, being an excellent performer

who is not only good at the steps, but controls and respects the rule of the play and brings subtlety and quality to it, is highly respected and can even be said to be a requirement for a leader in the society. Iidhano old and new thus celebrate tradition, clan and family alliances, history, political awareness, creativity and choice on a great diversity of occasions.

6 Myths & Metaphors: the Enduring Magic of Stories

(with Jacques Sakaria Mushaandja)

Stories! What a vital part of human cultures across the world. Stories (*omahokololo)* are an integral part of religions and education. They have multiple overt purposes, the most important of which are to act as moral guidelines, to entertain, to remember events and people of historical importance. Hence, stories are often metaphors of real life situations or potential. But deeper purposes lie in the social explanations of factors, which might otherwise be difficult to explain, in the stimulation of (especially) children's imagination, and through the confirmation of identity that is embedded in the presentation of familiar characters and circumstances.

Stories are told in words, writing, dances and songs. Indeed, one can hardly imagine a song that does not tell the listener something! So they can take the form of epics and sagas that relate the stories of people and heroes, or they can be as brief as a few words of a poem. This book would not be complete without showing how stories are and were performed in Aawambo culture. We will distinguish between storytelling as action and performance, and the stories themselves.

Mushaandja begins his perspective:

> A popular African proverb goes, 'the tale of the hunt will always glorify the hunter until the lions get their own storyteller'. The first time I heard this proverb, I could not stop thinking about what it possibly meant. This is a proverb that has been used by different storytellers from around the continent of Africa. Although many meanings have been derived from this proverb, it is mostly used to refer to the ownership dynamics of the story being told. It raises questions such as who is telling the story and how is the story told? It speaks of how power is shared between the storyteller and the spectators. The proverb above captures the essence of storytelling in any culture around the world. It speaks to the role(s) and usefulness that stories and storytelling carry in society for those who understand the underlying meanings.[1] Aawambo stories generally contain elements of myth as well as the use of metaphors which contribute to deeper meaning. The peoples' social knowledge was deeply embedded within these mythological figures and in-cultural metaphors.
>
> In Oshiwambo-speaking culture, like many other cultures around the world, storytelling performances come in different forms. Indigenous storytelling has historically been performed at different family and community rituals such as *oohungi* (gathering at night), *iidhano yeengombe* (cattle festivals), *iihokolola* (traditional court proceedings), *ohango* (wedding), *iiyugo* (children's pre-initiation ceremony), *oosa* (mourning periods) and many other

[1] See also Ngugi Wa Thiong'o, 2007.

> forms of social gatherings. This includes other forms of performance such as *uutewo*[2] (poems), *omaitango* (praise poetry), *oongano* (riddles), and *iiyimbo* (songs and musical instrumentation).
>
> My understanding of stories and storytelling is very broad. I believe that by virtue of living life, every human being performs one or more stories every day. For this particular chapter I specifically look at stories and storytelling as performed in oohungi, iiyugo and iidhano yeengombe. I will discuss some of the myths and metaphors played out in these rituals and how they created magic and meaning.
>
> I am a storyteller, a theatre maker, a performer and an educator. I have a great passion for telling and hearing stories. I would like to believe that storytelling is not just a passion but it's also my calling, a gift I inherited from many generations of storytellers from my family and communities. I come from a rich culture of countless stories which are performed by different storytellers. By rich, I am referring to both the aesthetic and instrumental power(s) that come with these stories. I am also referring to the influential and extraordinary talent that our storytellers possess.

Mushaandja went about collecting stories and information about the stories and their performers, by interviewing both elderly and contemporary storytellers to capture their storytelling styles and processes. He travelled to northern Namibia's "Owamboland" in search of "stories about stories". He collected tales and carried out a critical analysis of their aesthetics and functionalities. His own home village played a role, where he spoke to community storytellers and elders.

Storytellers and Storytelling

In the wider African context stories have typically been conveyed orally, that is, through storytellers. Due to the non-reliance on the written word of the past, storytellers were repositories of knowledge: of the community and its citizens; the outside world; healing and herbs; general scientific facts; and the religious cosmos. Mushaandja and other African writers refer to storytellers as "living libraries", who carry with them a wide range and collection of stories. Often, when the storyteller passes away, many of the stories do as well.

> "The storytelling process is quite individualised, and I observed and interviewed both elderly and contemporary storytellers to capture their storytelling styles and processes. There are some interesting theatrical aspects that present in the way storytellers perform. One could call them "theatrical magic", and they display a form and structure.

[2] Outewo in Oshikwanyama.

> Storytelling obviously requires a story teller, a story, an audience, and a specific context in which stories are told in different spaces and at different times. For example, oohungi are only staged in the evenings at the *oshinyanga,* the fireplace, in the traditional homestead. Everyone sits around the fire to participate in the storytelling. Like singing, storytelling is participatory, the audience as important as the teller. How the different elements interact gives the Aawambo storytelling culture its character. Further, the performance of stories in the past tended to be holistic, in the sense that the storytelling could include music and movement and dance, hence the earlier references to political history embodied in iidhano texts.[3]

> What makes a good story teller? Firstly, one could say that a good story teller can raise the anxiety of expectation and anticipation to a high level. Even when listeners already know the outcome or general outline of a story, a master (sic) storyteller is still able to draw the full attention of the listener, create the anxiety of expectation, enthrall, carry along, and then satisfy the expectation. As a result, the story becomes new in every telling. It's clearly an art of performance.[4]

Tauna Niingongo could be considered a master in telling Oshiwambo and other language stories, although he lives in Sweden and studied abroad. He fled Namibia at the age of 15 at the start of the Struggle, and moved to East Africa in 1960. After that he lived and studied in New York and later northern Europe. Tauna uses Asian healing arts as part of his performative storytelling, which usually includes singing, along with the playing of some instrument (e.g. a flute or drum). Tauna states that he believes in (re-)creating rural storytelling environments, "carrying (forward) the tradition of coming together around the fire to tell stories and make music. The stories deal with everyday life. The home of these stories is a village anywhere in Africa, in Europe and in other parts of the world like Asia and the Americas. It is night, people have gathered around the fire, for heat, love, light and life."[5]

And he starts playing a haunting flute melody, capturing everyone's attention and setting the mood for his story. His voice – now soft as a whisper, now loud and booming – transports the listener to a place where characters come alive. His body sways, or becomes stiff and rigid, dances or sags in sorrow. The story and the performance become one and the captivated audience and their reaction are living parts of the story. Story, storyteller and audience become one as they allow their imaginations to take flight. For the duration of the story, everyone involved is taken to a different world for a short while. Their emotions and anticipation feed into the performance as a vital part of the process, renewing the energy of the storyteller.

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3 See texts in chapters 4 and 5.

4 See also Satyo in Sheperd, 2004, and Sibiya, 2003.

5 Handwritten introduction notes to a performance at UNAM in Windhoek by Tauna Niigongo, 1996.

Over generations, traditional African societies developed high aesthetic and ethical standards for participating in and judging oral storytelling performances, and audience members may feel free to interrupt less talented performers to suggest improvements or voice their criticism. In fact if a story telling continues without any interruptions, or questions, one may wonder whether listeners are entranced or bored. Thus, a story teller might often pause for effect, playing on the tense expectation, or pretend to forget a name, or use other techniques to ensure that everybody is totally involved. This two-way process is continued until the story successfully reaches its climax and its resolution.

In Aawambo culture men and women are equally regarded as storytellers, but in my experience, they have mostly been older persons.

Stories

Stories are commonly told as entertainment, education, as a form of praise and in combination with song. Some stories are generic to many African cultures, and some indeed can be described as universal in ethic and character type. One thinks, for example, about the prevalence of the Hare as a character in so many stories that can be sung, visualized, danced and played. References to such familiar characters can be found in everyday speech and adages, even in political cartoons. It is thought that stories originated as an imaginative attempt to explain the universe. As a form of social media, stories include riddles, proverbs, songs, poetry, drama and dance. An amazing attribute of stories is that they can be used as inspiration for many different forms of art, including the visual arts. Hence, stories are commonly told as entertainment, for education, as a form of praise, as myth with its religious elements, and as a pure form of art in literature or film.

Stories as Entertainment and Education

When a story celebrates heroes, we call it a legend. Legends usually tell of cultural heroes and important ancestors who were intelligent, courageous and generous. Such heroes might be animals as well. Legends may include mythical creatures such as monsters, as in the example below.

Young people learn about their illustrious ancestors through story telling. They learn about those who did not measure up to social values and standards, characters who serve as a warning to the young. The purpose of these stories is to instill basic cultural values. It is for their embedded cultural meanings – instilling the values – that stories were such an important part of traditional indigenous education and initiation into full humanness.

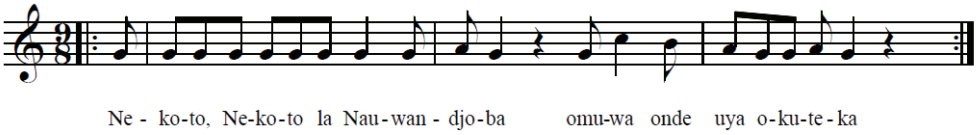
A term coined for stories with integrated songs is a *chantefable,* literally song-story.[6] The story is either completely sung, or contains a song that is crucial to the story itself. This song part would normally be known to children, or quickly taught, and provides them with an audience response. They sing the song with the storyteller.

Here is an example of a chantefable about an everyday hero who uses her brain to solve her problem. A story collected by Betty Hango-Rummukainen for the Music Department, UNAM, in 1993, as told by Olivia Shiwila, of Oshari village in the Okongo area:

The girl, Nekoto, daughter of Nauwandjoba.

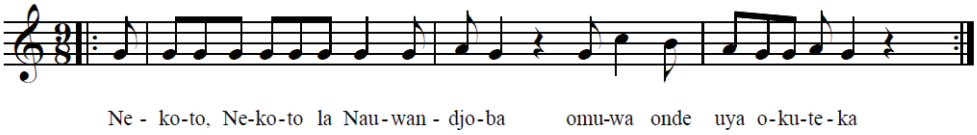
Opa li nee vati pe na omakishi mahapu taa mane po ovanhu. Shamha tuu ovanhu tava katala omeva, omakishi ohaa kala ashike a telamena pediva lomeva. Ovanhu vomonhele omo okwa li ihava teke vali. Opa li nee okakadona edina lako Nekoto laNauwandjoba. Oka li ke na eendunge dihapu. Onghee ne oka konga ondunge nghee ke na okweenda omakishi opo ehe ka lye po ngeenge taka ka teka. Efiku limwe oka fikama taka ka teka. Oka longekida nawa nghe ke na okweenda omakishi oo. Oke li dika nee oilela komaoko neefiti peemhando, opo tu ngeenge taka ende ile taka dana yo oivela neefiti otai kwelengendja. Nekoto okwa kufa oshitoo shaye, eshi tue e ya pediva, omakishi opo e li nale nokuli ngashi ngo shito. Nekoto okwa enda nga ta ehene komakishi, nokwa tameka nokuli ta dana ye ta imbi tati:

Nekoto, Nekoto laNauwandjoba
Omuwa onde uya okuteka
Nekoto, Nekoto laNauwandjoba
Omuwa onde uya okuteka



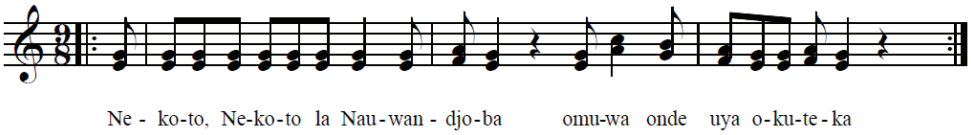
Nekoto ota ende ngo ta imbi ye ta dana a yuka ngo kediva oko ku na omakishi oko. Omakishi omanyakukwedi. Eshi tu atala Nekoto ta di kwinya, ta imbi ye ta dana, ekishi limwe ola tameka nokuli tali imbi nomwilwa. Omakishi a nyakukwa nee naana. Eshi ngo Nekoto a ehena popepi nao, ta imbi ngo ye ta dana, oo nao okwa tameka osho, ndele ta panyefukwa nee.

Nekoto:



[6] From the French.

Omakishi:



Nekoto kwa fika ne nokuli mokati komakishi omo, ndele tapa imbwa ne po tapa danwa. Eshi tu Nekoto a mona kuya omakishi a nyakukwa nee nawanawa, nokwa pwila mo nokuli mokwiimba nokudana, okwa dotola ashike oshitoo shaye nokuya. Osho ashike a kala nokuninga ngaha omafiku mahapu.

Hango-Rummukainen's translation:

Once upon a time there were many monsters (*omakishi)* in the world. In Nauwandjoba's area they liked to stay at a specific pond (*oshana*). When people came to fetch water, the monsters would catch and devour them. The people lived in fear and avoided that oshana even in times of drought. Nauwandjoba had a daughter whose name was Nekoto. She was very clever. She did not want to walk the long distance to the safe oshanas for water, so she made a plan. She would do something so that the omakishi would not catch her if she fetched water there. So Nekoto slipped bracelets onto her wrists. On her ankles she placed strings of the dried fruits of the *omuhongo* tree[7], so that when she walked or danced these anklets would rattle. Nekoto set off, carrying her clay pot on her head. As she neared the oshana she saw the omakishi there as usual. Nekoto walked towards them. She began to sing and dance:

Nekoto, Nekoto of Nauwandjoba
Goodness I have come to fetch water
Nekoto, Nekoto of Nauwandjoba
Goodness I have come to fetch water

So Nekoto sang and danced heading towards the pond where the monsters were. The monsters were very delighted when they saw Nekoto singing and dancing. One of them (ekishi) began to sing and whistle. When Nekoto came nearer, all the monsters became happy. They too began singing and dancing, repeating after Nekoto:

Nekoto, Nekoto of Nauwandjoba
Goodness I have come to fetch water

until they were all singing together. So Nekoto came amongst the monsters. When she saw that all of them rejoiced and were fully triggered by happiness, she took water from the pond with her clay pot and went away.

7 *Spiroslachys africanus*.

The potential for dramatic performance of this story is obvious – it has song, dance, dramatic power and suspense suitable for younger listeners. However, some stories tell us about "negative" characters or specific persons from a community, whose behaviour is an embarrassment or requires punishment. The story below illustrates this. Another story collected by Betty Hango-Rummukainen for the Music Department, UNAM, in 1993.

Hailume Eats His Hare

Once upon a time, there was a certain man whose name was Hailume. He was engaged to a girl who lived in the same village. One day he was expected at the house of the girl's parents so that he could meet the parents of the girl. Before he went there, he had made an appointment with the girl for a suitable time to visit. The parents awaited him in order to see if they would accept him as a son-in-law, or not. If they felt there was something wrong with him, the girl would not take him as future husband. Long, long ago, to kill an animal was a big event. It showed bravery in somebody. As Hailume was on the way to the house of the parents of the girl, he came across a hare. He killed it and took it with him. When he arrived at the house of the girl's parents, he handed the hare to his prospective mother-in-law. She said in a surprised voice: "Oh, you have come with meat, thank you." Hailume accepted thanks from his mother-in-law with a very proud voice: "Yes, grandmother, I was in a hurry when I came, otherwise I would have brought two hares." When Hailume had been properly greeted, the supper was prepared. Porridge, (*oshifima)* and a dish filled with the meat of the hare were brought before him. Hailume's mother-in-law had cooked the hare in a very delicious manner, for she put in some powdered nuts. But when Hailume looked in the dish, he said: "Oh, Grandmother, have you prepared the hare for me? I do not eat hare." Saying nothing, Hailume's future mother-in-law took the dish of hare and went back to the kitchen. She put the meat back into the pot. She covered the pot and put it in the pantry. She took a piece of dry vegetable (*evanda)*, cooked it immediately and took it to her son-in-law to eat with his porridge for supper. After the supper, Hailume was given a room where he could sleep alone. In the middle of the night Hailume woke up. He was thinking of the hare he had brought to that house, but he had not tasted its meat at all. He went out to the pantry, opened the door, went inside and looked into all the pots to find out where the meat of the hare was. Hailume's mother-in-law heard a noise at the kitchen *(kepata)* that woke her up. When she came to the pantry, she realised that something was inside. She came nearer, tiptoeing: "Shii, shishii, (noise to chase away) what is in this pantry? It must get out! Get out! Is it a dog?" Hailume growled like a dog: "Nghoo, nghoo." She continued, "Or is it a cat?" Hailume cried like a cat, "Miaw, miaw." She doubted that was what was really in the pantry. So she took a stick and came nearer. When she peeped in, Hailume immediately said: "It is me, Hailume, eating my hare. You have even spoiled it, because you put in powdered nuts!" Hailume was not accepted as the son-in-law.

Apart from its obvious performative potential, this story illustrates an aspect of social behavior. This story would leave a younger child wondering – what was so wrong with eating the hare? Why did he pretend not to like it? The children would talk

among themselves. They would ask parents. And eventually the behaviour mistake would be pointed out to them – and they would remember the story. An effective form of social education.

Stories, Storytelling and Praise Poetry

Mushaandja :

> The culture and practice of praise poetry or *omaitango* has always been part of the day to day practices of the Aawambo people. They are mainly and formally performed at ceremonies, rituals and festivals such as *oohango/omafundula* (weddings), *iidhano yeengombe* (cattle festivals), funerals, rites of passages such as *etanda* (boys' initiations) and *epiitho* (birth celebrations), and social gatherings. Rich poetry is recited to young initiates, wedding couples or the deceased as a way of paying homage and celebrating. This poetry is often performed by *aatangi* (praise poets/singers) at these formal events but can be performed by anyone else as a way of showing pride in their own identity or someone else's.

Solo singers with musical instruments, such as bow players (e.g. okambulumbumbwa) and okasandji[8] players sing praise poetry as the core of their repertoires. Examples can be found in the musical creations of Naimbudu. Even his chosen clothing (he doesn't

Fig. 6.1: Shilengifa Naimbudu, praise performer, with his okambulumbumbwa

[8] Lammellophone

perform without this attire) tells its story about his cultural identity and older traditions. In his song "Nakambale kakatika" one can easily spot the references to older cultural practices, as well as humour, or is it shame at an embarrassing occurrence? Its text goes:

> "Let's go back home and start all over again, because the things we were carrying fell off and we need to arrange ourselves again. It's really you, who laugh at me, Naimbudu yaHangula. I have nothing to be laughed at." (Translation S. Löytty.) This song is based on a proverb that goes: "Tuningeni nakambale kakatika, omulongo gwatika na twa alukeni."

Omulongelo gwatika refers to the gifts usually carried in a basket (*okambale*) that fell when they/he went to visit some people. Now they have to return home to fix everything up.[9]

The lyrics of this song paint a telling picture of people who follow strict social rules concerning respect and politeness in the community, and their frustration and shame when things (inevitably) go wrong. It draws a picture of people walking long distances carrying gifts of ground omahangu or nuts or salt in their baskets. Was it a stone that tripped him up? Was it a hole in the ground, or was he just tired or hungry? The brevity of the lyrics leaves one to wonder about these things, as they are meant to.

Naimbudu sings about Aawambo kings, about pride at the birth of the Namibian nation, and often, about sad events in its past.

Poetry and Songs during the Struggle

The expression of ideas and song in words was carried with some of the fighters and activists into the struggle. Known as the first Oshiwambo-speaking poet to have been published was Hans Daniel Namuhuja, who was born in Oniipa. Another is the contemporary poet Peya Mushelenga who hails from Oshigambo.

The best known struggle poet in Namibia is Mvula ya Nangolo, born in Oniimwandi in 1943, a journalist and published poet. After working for most of his life as a journalist – in Europe, Tanzania, Zambia and Namibia – he became National Poet of Namibia after Independence. His best-known publications are *Exile*, *Thoughts from Exile*, and most recently *Watering the Beloved Desert*.

Towards the end of the armed struggle (1982), Henning Melber edited a volume of poems illustrating the culture of resistance of the time.[10] Nghifikua's anthology "Slavery and Death are One and the Same" (2001) explores similar themes, mainly around the call for independence.

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9 From the recording notes of the album *Oiyimbo yokambulumbumbwa*, by Shilengifa Naimbudu, produced by S. Löytty, 2006–2007.

10 *It is No More a Cry*, Henning Melber, 1982.

In his best-selling music album "Pure Love" (2005), Ras Sheehama states: "This album contains many messages that deal with spirituality in the modern world and the political turmoil facing all of us in different parts of the world."[11] The songs, in both English and Oshiwambo, reach out to a wider demographic of listeners, while still retaining an Omuwambo aesthetic. For instance, the hit song "Ino Tila" begins:

Ino tila kuum kandje
Shaashi nomongula etang
Otali pitiOkuzakuuailo
Djuukakuuninginino
Kaliza kuumbugantu
Kuumbangalantu (etc.)

English lyrics:

Love has to spread,
'pon the four corners of the earth
Never look down on no brother
Because we all look up to the father (etc.)

The song continues to spread hope "tomorrow the sun will rise" and "wipe away your tears and be strong … It rains for all of us … Even the neighbours have planted seeds" and so forth, thus remaining a standard eleven years after it was first released.

Stories for Spirituality, Healing

African traditional storytelling is known for its strong connection to the spiritual and ancestral realm and its provision of therapy and healing.[12] Mushaandja writes :

> Although this appears to be rather invisible in the modern Aawambo culture, it historically used to be a great part of the traditional practices. Stories such as "*Wanashipolo: aya nomwenyo mofuka"* and poems such as "*Omandengu gomuuzilo*" are some of the greatest examples of the people's connection to the underground of ancestral Africa.

Even when complete stories were not involved, drama used to play a major role in all important festivities, especially those where "good magic" was involved – women's marriage ceremonies, collecting salt, and iron mining. These events were the terrain of the namunganga.

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[11] From the album cover notes.

[12] Mabweazara, 2002, and Schipper, 1986, discuss these issues, amongst others.

Namunganga and Eenganga

Eenganga are healers, herbalists, traditional doctors, previously called witch doctors by the uninformed, because they were thought to practice magic. Some are diviners (*eenganga yeanekelo)*, others healers (*eenganga yomiti*). Or an individual might be both.[13] The namunganga was an onganga (male or female) of inestimable importance at certain ceremonies, who acted as "master of ceremonies" but who was trained by elder eenganga in dealing with the spirits, and who could ensure that important ceremonies would have a positive outcome. Healers and diviners were considered holy and placed next to the king in the social hierarchy.[14] See Chapter 4, pp. 70–72 for a description of namunganga's roles in efundula and olufuko. Here, let us just look at the dramatic roles this person used to take; since frowned upon in post-colonial times, their role has diminished.

> Eenganga are considered doctors and herbalists – with magic. A namunganga's main task was preparing the environment and the persons involved in important ceremonies. Thus, a male namunganga accompanied young men to the salt pan (*ekango lyomongwa*) when they went to fetch salt. His task was to ceremonially "open" the salt pan (see Chapter 3, p. 37).

For important ceremonies such a person has special implements: a headdress imbued with magic sealed in with special herbs to keep "bad" spirits away; special items of clothing to indicate his/her status; a gnu tail whisk of superior quality, and other more personal items such as special talismans around neck, ankles and waist, for example. This was the dramatic "costume", and the stage was the site for opening the pan for salt collecting, or opening the forest for mining, or the oshana and shelters for ohango and efundula.

Namunganga were well prepared for their tasks, usually learnt from an elder or relative. It was told to early researchers that namunganga were often homosexual,[15] because it was believed that this gave them a special ability or status to communicate with the spirits of the forefathers and to ward off evil spirits. In today's climate of non-acceptance of homosexuality in Namibia this is denied or an answer is diplomatically avoided. The stigma attached to homosexuality may have been equally severe in times past, resulting in eenganga and namunganga living isolated lives, their homesteads a distance away from others.

Feared somewhat for their close connection to the local king and the spirits, they were quick to use this to the advantage of dramatic effect – directing the drummers, the

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[13] Hiltunen, 1993, p. 39.

[14] According to Nestori Wäänänen, in Hiltunen, 1993, p. 39.

[15] Norborg, Ake, 1987. A Handbook of Musical and Other Sound-Producing Instruments from Namibia and Botswana (Musikmuseets Skrifter); P. Hayes, 1998. Hayes goes into an in depth discussion of the probable gender and role of the namunganga in securing the political power of kings.

dancers, and knowing all the secret ceremonies – never to be spoken of outside of those involved, e.g., aafuko (brides), salt collectors, and miners. For this reason, it was the responsibility of others to ensure that namunganga received ample baskets of omahangu, nuts, meat, and other fine foods whenever he or she undertook major tasks.

It is said that the souls of dead namungangas are transformed into lions, giving us some indication of how powerful they were seen to be.

In light of contemporary developments and an effort to re-cover dissolving traditions and knowledge, Mushaandja conducted several interviews with black urban traditional healers. This information forms part of his Master's thesis, but also informs his performances as poet, performer/theatre maker, with a keen interest in the subjects of healing and shamanism. Here are parts of his creative writing script on eenganga, performed on various occasions in Windhoek. The poem controversially touches on the aspect of gender and homosexuality – considered by some a "disease" with stigma and social exclusion attached. It talks of issues of magic in urban environments, of encounters with western civilization, war, and suppression of indigenous beliefs by the Christian religion. It refers to an "invasion" of foreign shamans who are not of Aawambo, or even of Namibian descent. Mushaandja: "I wrote the poem of Eenganga as part of my completed MA research project, in which I explored the notion of performer as shaman by using auto-ethnographic material."

Eenganga
Moons came and went
Seasons changed
It was the great circle of life
One generation after the other
Nambalakata spirit child was born
A flower child
A breed of the universe
A unisex creation
A native queer
A dual vibration
Two by two-spirit
Androgynous by nature
I know this because my alter ego is a lesbian. Her name is Joli, she comes from the Eastern Cape and she is a dancer.
A gift to humanity
Contrasting beautiful Nambalakata
Special child
Met die helm gebore

Nambalakata was born dead
Her lifeless body came with a memo from the ancestors

A messenger had arrived to this world
A ritual that involved a horse, a dream and long-distance travelling had to be performed
For her to enter our world
They didn't hesitate
You see this kind of thing runs in the family
It's those things we choose not to talk about
Ask the elders, they will tell you
They had to take her away for many days
They had to take her far so that they could breathe life into her
For her to live again
Sounds like a piece of magical realism, doesn't it?

A singer
An artist
Griot
Jeli
Jali
Onkulungu
A village poet
Enyakwa
Do you remember John Muafangejo?
Ndevasia
Do we still have the chronicles of Kaujeua, Tate Kwela and Onghili ya Nashima?

Nambalakata is the Seer
The chosen one
That child at home who hears visions and sees voices
I call her VoiceSeer
The child who tells us when there are snakes at home
The snakes that nobody sees
Because they are under the bed, in the closet
Concealed in the laundry

I see her
I see his internal battles
Her resentment towards life for choosing her
His bitterness reproducing itself in her belly
She is at war with her skeletons
Always in search for a way to run from her shadows
Her ghosts make her sick
They are misinterpreted and confused by her society
She says what she sees
Invisible realities to those in her presence

The stigma is not light
Never mind the naming and shaming

Everyone has something to say about the poor child
They are the cause of her unstoppable anxiety
Some even call her the ugly child
The evil child
The dirty child
Okanona kena elaka lyapya
They have all kinds of names for her

They take her to different churches and hospitals
To find a cure for her obscure illness
But there seem to be no effective treatment for the diagnoses
Priests said she was a witch hunt
Doctors said she was mentally disturbed

Nambalakata is a loner
She talks to the flowers and plays with the dogs
When she was by herself
She was a free spirit
A creative creature
Singing like a bird
A flying eagle
Meditating on her dreams
Fantasising about tomorrow
Free from oppressions

The voices in his head followed him to the Catholic School
But there was no place for them
Nobody ever heard them, except Nambalakata of course
They would talk to him whenever they pleased
Inviting him to go with them

One day, one of the voices
The highest of them all
Was calling him to return home
Nambalakata was determined to ignore
The voice decided to ring the bells of church
Driving Nambalakata out of the school
Directing him to the Namib dunes
To the mountains of antique wisdom
To the conservatoire of his craft
It was time for his initiation, his education
Fast Forward
Play
Let's see
Ladies and gentlemen I present to you Nambalakata, a professional spiritualist.
Herbalist, a spirit-medium, a therapist

A traditional medicine man from sub-Saharan Africa
Tangled up in post-colonial culture
The modern product of our heritage

Be warned!
Nambalakata is accused of being Omulodhi
Toor dokter
Witch dokter
A name he got from the European
Still valid in the 21st century
"You can't trust him, not all the time" they say
Yet they all go to see him
Privately after their church sermons
To consult his bag of magical possibilities
Shifting roles depends on circumstance
Tomorrow she is the Christian Pagan
Yesterday he was the Shamaniac
Today he is the Urban Shaman

The Urban Shaman
The Urban Dweller
A nomad from the countryside
An urban villager
A migrant labourer
A servant of a multi-cultural community
An educator, a health practitioner
Fighting for his place
In the global space

Subjected to the ghetto
Katutura
"A place where we do not want to live"
This is the urban shaman
Fighting for his roots, her purpose
To be recognized
By the statesmen and legislation

They all consult her
One after the other
For strength and advice they say
His herbs come from the veld

She knows how they smell especially after the rain
Medicine
Omiti
Iiti
"Ek gebruik net dagga, finish en klaar" she says

She shows me a picture of a newly born infant who looks like he had Kwashikor[16] or malnutrition.
"Hierdie kind was so siek gewees. Ek het net dagga en brandewyn gebruik. Finish en klaar."

The Christian Pagan
A Christian pagan
With a subjective denomination
One which finds harmony between his ancestors and Jesus Christ
He smokes the Bible
From Revelations to Genesis
It is in the back of her head
His way of accessing the special world
Transporting him into the other realm
Making her dance like a real shaman
Among the elephants

Her Shrines meet at a crossroad
Creating an intersection of his medicine room, God and the Church
Built to accommodate the speech of her body
The movement of his tongue
He is the embodiment of spiritual freedom
She said he had a vision of Sangomas dancing to gospel tunes
Screaming "Hallelujah; Thokozani"
"If every church was built by men then I can also build my own church"
He defends his peculiar identity

Destructed by his copy
The fabricated version
The chancer, her competition
"Ons soek nie daai mense hier nie. Hulle mors met ons se beesigheid" He argues.
"How can an outsider be stronger than my ancestors" she asks.
This is the other
The other one
The one who solves all kinds of problems you can think of
From sex to money issues
This is a foreigner from a nearby country
Crossed the border to find greener pastures
Now, the locals consult his medicine too
Some have even adopted his business plan
They have picked up his theatrical methodology for a quick buck
The others call him a scam
I can't tell if he is really one
He seems quite sure of himself
I guess this is why he has many clients

16 Kwashiorkor.

The Shamaniac
This is the Shamaniac
She can be verbally and physically violent
She is angry
Very angry
Kwaai
Contradictions
There is an absence of inner peace
Her body is a spiritual battle field
She is restless
Schizophrenic
Anxious
Paranoid
Paralyzed
Bi Polar
Tick tock tick tock tick tock tick disorder. Tick tock tick tock tick tock tick disorder. Tick tock tick tock tick tock tick disorder. Tick tock tick tock tick tock tick disorder. Tick tock tick tock tick tock tick disorder. Tick tock tick tock tick tock tick disorder.
Kwaai
Contradictions
I think Aathithi are at work
Aathithi mba hayathitha
Uuyuni uukwanambwinyuka
I am not sure if it's bad omen
It's just her ancestors, the ruthless ones, dealing with her
It's just her voice fighting with the invisibles
She is being punished for something he didn't do
Something she did do
She is a drunk
Kaal gat,
Home brew
Old brown cherry
It's time for her check up
Every helper needs a helper

You see, she is not a kaal gat
This is an interdimensional human being
Make no mistake
She is a walking archive
Have you ever heard of a BantuKhoi Encyclopaedia?
A natural heritage site
Her body knows many things
It's been to many places
"Their nurses and doctors have a thing or two to learn from our medicine. We are the wisdom of this land" she says.

She doesn't walk alone
She stands on the shoulders of the giants who give her keys to the many doors ahead

Hear their voices
The voices will not lie
The voices will not die
Hear their voices
They will remain the voices that guide you to the right path
They will call your name and you will answer
Answer child; answer the call; it's from the great ones

You know the voices
You have seen them before
They throw bones
Burning elephant dung
Telling you to read the future
To be the Afro-Chant Shaman of your people

Their voices were suppressed
Colonial ideologies
They were accused of being savages
Their weapons, their instruments restricted from doing its work
But the voices always found their place
These are the voices that see
Bringing us melodies and remedies to wash away our sins
The healing of a nation
The therapy for our broken dreams
Spiritual cleansing at your service
They may sound tattered and shattered
But they will always be seen

Nambalakata teach the children
Songs of Bi Kidude
Tell them about the world that exists beneath the Welwitchia Mirabilis

Listen to the voices Nambalakata and allow them to do their work
Nambalakata.

In this extended poem, one sees aspects of the predicament of changing faces and identities throughout history into the present – the challenges, the potential isolation of the artist and the "othering" of differently gendered persons. In the poetry and performances of Mushaandja, there seem to be traces of traditional praise songs and poetry. The first section referring mainly to eenganga in early times, and invokes some of the pain and fear resulting from a powerful person being rebranded as evil. The effects of almost enforced urbanization brought about by the need to earn cash leads to the creation of a new iden-

tity, miscast and misused, with all the psychological effects thereof. Constantly changing niveaux of politics, religions, economies, social configurations – all impact upon the already strained psyche of being spiritualist, materialists and, not least, homosexual.

But is this a genre arising from a specific Aawambo language or cultural tradition? Jacques seems to feel that it is, since he makes direct use of stories and songs from his background in his performances. For example, he burns a small container of elephant dung (or cow dung) to release the smoke, "so as to find spiritual and medicinal healing from my ancestors" according to one of his Facebook postings. He also makes use of an interpretation of traditional clothing for his stage performances – thus presented in new urban settings to relatively "uninformed" audiences. Shishani Vranckx writes:

> In 2013, he released the "Black Bantu Child" EP with five songs where he touches on various socio-historical, cultural and political issues. In the songs "Kapande", "Aambo", "Etenda" and "Ongolo" Jacques uses traditional tales, praise poetry and historical narrative, while in "Katutura" he touches on contemporary issues concerning the loss of cultural knowledge and human potential in Windhoek's township… Such performances can be seen as clear examples of how urban artists are negotiating between rural traditional and contemporary urban practices, which in turn create their "identities".[17]

Clearly, the traditional relationship between music, dance, stories and dramatic content that can be perceived in olufuko, for example, is undergoing certain changes as customs adapt to modern times and urban environments. For a period after Independence, stage dramas appeared to relate only to contemporary problems, hopes and dreams. The Internet has created a welcome arena for poets to publicise their poems, e.g., http://www.poetrysoup.com/poems/nationality/namibian, which contains many Namibian-written poems in English, while https://moshiwambo.wordpress.com/ is a site dedicated to poetry and stories in Oshiwambo. This indicates a growing awareness of the importance of verbal expression as a carrier of culture as well as personal identity. It shows the increasing use of electronic media amongst all population groups. Currently, however, work by Mushaandja and others reflects a growing interest in rediscovering different customary practices including important values embedded in rituals and rites, and the magic of the eenganga, thus finding deeper cultural contents embedded in song, dance and theatrical actions, reinterpreting them for contemporary audiences. Changing faces, or perhaps a layering of cultural artistic faces over time?

[17] Vranckx, S. (2015).

7 Urban Oshiwambo Music: Hybrid Realities

(with Shishani Vranckx)

A topic never previously tackled or published in Namibia is that of contemporary developments in the urban or young music of Oshiwambo-speakers. Some years ago, in the late Nineties, a question was put to me at an international conference: "What is the township music vibe in Windhoek?" To my embarrassment I had to answer that at that stage, there was little live "township" music happening, and that clubs mostly featured bands doing "covers", with a lot of South African influence. The audience was scornful.

The fact is that with our small Namibian population, and with the issues stemming from the Christianising processes, apartheid, and the armed liberation struggle, a clear Namibian pop or contemporary sound had had little chance of developing at the pre-independence time. The potential music buying market was small and recording studios were lacking. But all this was soon to change.

As described earlier, the Aawambo people were heavily involved in the armed struggle from its early days. This meant that, although SWAPO camps encouraged live performances of all the Namibian cultures in order to keep cultural identities alive, there were many external influences – more than there had been inside of Namibia.

Musicians who began their musical careers during that thirty-year period made contact with many different musical cultures – from Namibia, from other African countries, and from the more distant European and American countries including Cuba.

In this chapter, contemporary musicians tell of those experiences – their personal discoveries that it was okay, even good, to sing in their own language. They found that it was possible to use tunes from their own cultural background and that it was fine to adapt those songs and instrumental sounds using new instruments, changing harmonies, and using different rhythms that were in line with modern beats. In this way new music developed from contact with foreign sounds, as well as from the known, the old music of one's memories.

Post-independence presents a very changed scene. The music industry has boomed! For the first time Namibians are buying recordings by locals, and it is possible to make a modest living. Garage recording studios have sprung up and the South African recording industry has less of a hold on local artists.

A growing live music performance in different regions has contributed to change as well. One must mention that the government has begun to make funds avail-

able for various festivals and competitions, all of which are encouraging for artists and budding musicians.[1] Increasingly, musicians are beginning to develop their music in a direction which demonstrates a growing respect for home grown cultures and indigenous sounds.

Shishani, with whom this chapter is co-written, has experienced much of that scene herself, being involved in performances and competitions, and very often carrying away the honours. She tells of her own experiences and information gleaned from dozens of interviews with local musicians below.

Shishani writes: To understand the urban contemporary Oshiwambo music (referring to songs in that language as well as songs by Aawambo artists), I did a broader study on the contexts that shaped the current music and performance styles, because I believe that there's a correlation between the musical and performance vocabulary that artists use, and the exposure they've had to certain music styles throughout life. This exposure depends on many factors, including upbringing, because the context of our upbringing largely molds our knowledge about life, daily (cultural) practices and our musical worlds. Since my own musical upbringing took place in The Netherlands, I was very interested to discover similarities and differences. Therefore, I focused on the personal histories of the artists performing urban music. Most of the musicians I spoke to were raised in Namibia, while seven of them spent time in exile and returned to Namibia after Independence.

I define urban artists broadly as those that live in Windhoek city or other "big cities" in Namibia. Those in Windhoek were exposed to influences (social and musical) not commonly found in rural areas. Living in Windhoek made access to particular instruments and equipment for musicians more possible, allowing them to practice and experiment. Several younger musicians used the opportunities to take lessons at local institutions. These factors allowed for new styles of music and expression to develop. Interesting crossovers between rural and urban styles are currently being made and experimented with in music, dance and fashion. I discuss some of these trends below.[2]

During the Struggle

From the 1960s until Independence in 1990, many Namibians sought refuge in neighbouring countries such as Angola and Zambia. Those who were artistically inclined saw exile as a chance to follow their musical passion. Growing up in exile provided unex-

1 Cf. The National Arts Council of Namibia.

2 Anima, the African Ballet production by the First Rain Dance Theatre performed in Windhoek between 27th–29th March 2014 is an excellent example of mixing traditional and modern modes of expression in the creation of a truly contemporary work.

pected, albeit limited, options for musical development in spite of the restrictions of war. As Ras Sheehama recalls:

> People [up north] could cross to Angola to join SWAPO. So I said, to be free, and to do whatever I want, I would have to go into exile. If I go to the camps of SWAPO, I might be able to get a guitar there...

Artists that grew up in the exile camps were exposed to Oshiwambo cultural songs, which were often transformed into liberation songs and dances. These songs were the major source of music. Hishishi Papa explained that some characteristics of traditional Oshiwambo music and dance were somehow preserved and explored in exile. Music was part of everyday life, and a remedy against boredom since music was the only form of entertainment those days. Specific musicians in these exile camps, namely Jackson Kaujeua, Steve Hanana, and Ras Sheehama, became role models for aspiring musicians. Although Jackson was Omuherero he sang in several Namibian languages. After camp school, during weekends, the young men hung out and learnt to play guitar from older boys. Popular music from North America, South Africa and the Caribbean, as well as (traditional) music from Zimbabwe, Zambia and Nigeria – where the artists lived in exile – added to the sources of music artists absorbed before heading back to Namibia.

Minette notes: Ras' later music developed somewhat beyond his early Reggae, especially after touring some European destinations. Hence, his hit song "Ino tila" from the album *Pure Love* (a South African production), is more love ballad than roots reggae, but his smooth interpretation, light voice and heartfelt lyrics earned him a huge audience following at the time.

Shishani: Depending on specific circumstances (geographical location, social networks, access to radios and radio reception) some musicians were exposed to styles of music that others would only hear after returning to Namibia. Of the fourteen artists who

Fig. 7.1: Ras Sheehama

Fig. 7.2: Hishishi Papa

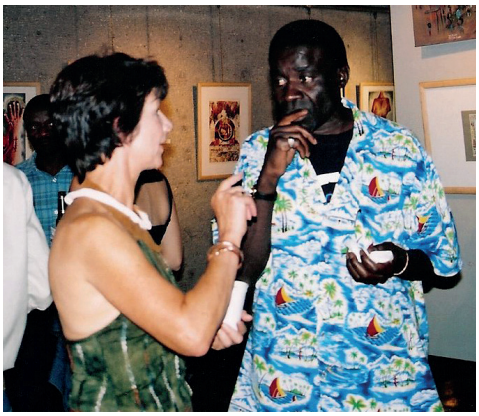

Fig. 7.3: Jackson Kauyeua chatting with the author (2004)

grew up in Namibia, half were born just before or after independence, and did not live through much of the apartheid era. They did, however, vividly experience the change from apartheid into a free country challenging racial divides and restrictions, which also entailed the liberation of the media. During apartheid there was heavy censorship on what music was played. Anything challenging the authority of the South African regime was banned. After liberation, radio channels and television "democratized" and started broadcasting international music, while more local music started coming up. People were now free to live where they wanted to, not restricted to the former "homelands" or "Bantustans" that were created during apartheid. That and the global process of urbanization created increasing and constant migrations between rural and urban settings. These migrations catalyzed the challenge of today's urban Namibian youth identity. Some of the artists grew up in the village and came to Windhoek for further education. Others grew up in the city and travelled to the village every holiday. For those growing up in the village the aspect of cultural heritage was part of everyday life. Those growing up in cities had parents or family that made it a point for them to know their language and heritage.

Nonetheless, the differences between city life and village life diverge starkly in terms of influences that shape everyday life. These differences have been causing some frictions when it comes to matters of identity. *Ombwiiti* is a derogatory term used to signify people who have "lost touch with their culture", and various interviewees shared their experience on this matter. Jacques Mushaandja recalls:

> I remember the first show I did, somebody came to me and said: "You're a Wambo who never went to the village as much as he'd like to or as much as he'd like to show us. You are not a real Wambo."

This comment stung him, and he asks the question: what is a "real Wambo"?

Minette: As a group working on this book, we would agree that "culture" is a term often misused and misinterpreted, and that urban or rural circumstances don't by themselves define who you are. It is true, however, that cultures are permeable and changeable. Persons in cities are more open to mixing with other cultures and thereby their own culture adapts and "learns" new things. This is neither good nor bad. It just is.

Shishani continues: My investigations showed that peoples' exposure to music depended on where they were (geographically), the social environment, whether they had access to radios and certain radio channels, as well as availability of music to purchase. Not many Namibian artists were aired on radio before independence except the two most known Oshiwambo-speaking artists: Tate Kwela and Nangili Nashima. Tate Kwela's soaring, high lyrical voice accompanied by his guitar playing remains as fresh as ever on a few recordings, e.g. "*Kanailonga"* and "*Ohela hela"* on Youtube.

The available exposure to music in Namibia was thus directly linked to the apartheid policy which controlled the media until independence. In comparison to South Africa and other African countries, Namibia was exposed to radio and TV fairly late. Although South Africa had started broadcasting radio in 1923, they only started broadcasting in Namibia in 1956 under the South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC), which fell under direct rule of the South African government. Programs were in English and Afrikaans only, aimed at the white communities. In 1969, SABC launched three ethno-linguistic services in Namibia, broadcasting in three languages: Otjiherero, Damara/Nama and Oshiwambo. These three radio stations were established as an extension of the SABC: Radio Bantu. The philosophy behind Radio Bantu was to control and pacify the "Natives" through heavy censorship. All music with critical messages undermining the authorities was banned. Most Reggae, for example, was forbidden. Only Gospel, romantic and dance ("party") music from the USA and South Africa were broadcast and distributed in the country. Later, recordings of local artists made at SABC studios were broadcast as well. For language reasons Aawambo households listened to the Oshiwambo service on NBC radio, which broadcast mainly Zimbabwean, South African and American (gospel and country) music. Primarily South African and Zimbabwean music could be bought in Namibia.

One can see that Namibia's rich and painful history with racial and cultural oppression shaped the developments in urban music. For a long time Namibians were isolated from other parts of the world, as well as from hearing their own language on radio. It's not surprising therefore, that reggae became the "music of the freedom fighters", as Ras Sheehama put it. Inspired by the message of freedom found in reggae music, young musicians living under apartheid and going into exile were attracted to the style. After independence and their return from exile, they built up a reggae scene, which for a long time has been the most prominent live music scene in Namibia.

Thus, despite the relinquishing of many cultural practices and songs through the historical processes of Christianisation and colonialism, Aawambo retained their musical traditions through adaptation and transformation of traditional songs into, for example,

liberation songs. Some artists actively research traditional culture and musical practices (songs and tales), and are creating contemporized versions and adaptations of it. Jacques Mushaandja, for example, is pioneering the performance of traditional Aawambo stories, tales and chants in various urban poetry, theatre, and other performance settings. The content of the songs, and their lyrical and/or musical elements (such as rhythms, hand-clapping and melodies) are elements with which contemporary urban artists are experimenting, incorporating these into their music. All the musicians I spoke with stressed their view of the importance of cultural background. They see music as a way to carry on cultural heritage.

Music of Today

The coming of independence in 1990 opened up doors to new music and opportunities for musicians in Namibia. The Independence concert of 1990 for the first time brought big name international musicians to the Namibian stage and allowed Namibian budding musicians to sing there. This in itself gave a boost to the growth of music. This was followed over the following few years by famous African performers like Salif Keita, Ismael Lo and Manu Dibango appearing in Katutura to packed stadiums and surely inspired many to try out new sounds.

During the 1980s and 1990s South African genres like Township Disco and Bubblegum, also known under terms Mapantsula, were commonly adopted and performed by Namibian artists.

Several contemporary musicians explained to me that the best way to express oneself is in your mother tongue. In addition, some artists regard performing in Oshiwambo as a way of preserving cultural heritage and expressing self-pride, even to the extent of building *okwiitanga* into songs. Some perform solely in Oshiwambo while the majority mix Oshiwambo with other languages. A special case should be mentioned: a man who calls himself "Wambo seun" (Wambo boy) who raps in Afrikaans because he grew up in a mainly Afrikaans environment with a Boer family.

Currently house, Afro-pop ("Africanized" pop music), hiphop and kwaito are the most popular styles on radio and in terms of artist popularity, shows and sales. Performances in these styles are characterized by the vocalist(s) singing or rapping over the "backing track": the instrumental track playing through the speakers from a computer or CD-player. This means that the artists bring along a CD with their music, which is then played through the speaker system while they perform on stage either alone or accompanied by dancers. These shows are more often than not joined by dancers who perform a choreography

together with the main artist. This trend mainly has to do with the lack of money events organizers have been willing to pay for live bands the past years. Through lack of finance for artists from the 1990s until now, artists were pushed to work with backing tracks because events organizers didn't want to pay for full bands. Backing tracks were cheaper in terms of payments and also saved money on renting music equipment.

For the past five years *house* music – electronic dance music – is most popular among the urban youth (globally) and Oshiwambo speaking artists, such as Killa B and Lady May, have been delving into producing and performing in this style. Lady May won a large televised talent competition in South Africa as a dynamic, sometimes outrageous performer. Nowadays, these "backing-track artists" are exploring possibilities of working with live bands as well. Slowly there is some change in this through initiatives like "The Last Band Standing Competition" which have been boosting live music the past three years.

Electronic urban music styles in Oshiwambo mainly use a 4/4 time, and are based on beats filled with synthesizer sounds. Lyrics are often mixed; various dialects of Oshiwambo intersected with English and Afrikaans. The urban scene often follows global music trends. However, one cannot ignore the particular sound of the kwaito songs which have ruled the past two decades. Different genres are represented in the electronic sphere: kwaito, hiphop, hikwa (hiphop and kwaito), kwiku (shambo and kwassa kwassa), afro-pop, house, RnB and gospel. RnB, pop and Afro-pop have been the musical avenues in which most popular female Oshiwambo speaking artists, included Tequila, Sally and Gal Level, have made their way into the Namibian music industry the past decade. It's clear, however, that female singers still perform mainly as backing singers and few have found themselves on track as soloists.

Fig. 7.4: Wambo seun

Fig. 7.5: Sally

The lyrical content in the electronic genres largely depends on the style of music, and can vary from personal life stories, to social issues, party music, and even motivational or gospel songs. Gospel is popular in Namibia because of the strong influence of the church. Most recently Vocal Motion 6 (VM6), an a capella group, won an international award for their album on which they perform gospel songs in various languages including Oshiwambo, English and Portuguese.

Urban music follows a pop-music structure whereby verses are rapped or sung, and choruses include multiple voices rapping or singing the chorus together. Lately artists such as Blossom have broken through with a mix of acoustic-pop music, reminiscent of artists like Tracy Chapman but in Oshiwambo and with a modernized sound.

Live Music

In terms of live performances in urban music, Reggae bands set the trend since independence, joined by artists who perform Shambo [3], Oviritje [4], Ma/gaisa or "Damara Punch".[5] Gospel and R&B have a huge following in Namibia and singers perform both with backing tracks or live bands. Mainly live artists are experimenting with incorporating distinctive elements of traditional Oshiwambo music – such as specific hand-clap patterns, melodies and texts – in their own genres. Some artists are re-making songs by the elder generation of Oshiwambo musicians such as Tate Kwela and Nangili Nashima in contemporary styles, e.g., Jackson Wahengo covering Tate Kwela's song (at Independence) "*Mpa nda popi / nda lili*" which translates to "Here I speak Here I cry". Artist Panduleni is specifically working on creating a fusion of *okambulumbumbwa* music (traditional resonated musical bow) with contemporary sounds and arrangements.

Minette: The Wahengo brothers, as the group Set-Son and the Mighty Dreads, recreated this *okambulumbumbwa* sound in their title track of the album "*Kula Umone*", with a repetitious and catchy riff on two adjacent tones that underlies the entire song. The rhythm is typical of some of the bow songs I have recorded, especially amongst herders, playing uuta, a mouth resonated bow, while walking. Other tracks of this album look to older traditions, and revive some of Tate Kwela 's songs.

Shishani : Many traditional rhythms are characterized by the 6/8 time, whereas reggae, pop, and gospel are commonly in 4/4 time. This initially caused technological difficulties, leading Hishishi Papa to comment:

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3 Shambo is mix of traditional Aawambo music with modern influences and instrumentation

4 Oviritje is music in Otjiherero with specific rhythms and melodies.

5 Ma/gaisa is a popular dance music known as Damara Punch, derived from Damara traditional music, is mainly sung in Khoekhoegowab or Nama/Damara.

> Wambu's are rich; they have many rhythms and dances. And these rhythms and dances are for the Ntu, "the people". The dances are not Owambo. They are Bantu. This is what we all [all Bantus] do. But this 6/8 rhythm is ours. It's even hard to get this rhythm on a computer. Studio work with a click track on this rhythm was hard. And in studios we are outside of our tradition. As musicians we should be in studios not to please the producers and professors, but as creators of the music. They should please us.

However, technological challenges are being overcome. I have come across Shambo crossover music whereby traditional melodies were recorded over electronically produced songs with synthesizers and 6/8 rhythms. Shambo artists are amongst the leading artists who actively combine traditional Aawambo rhythms, songs and melodies with modern instrumentation, sounds and arrangements. Tulonga Wahengo, Ngatu and Tunakie are leading names is this genre. More recently, artists like Jackson Wahengo and Naxa Nakale are mixing Shambo with Blues, Rock and other musical influences to create new unique settings for traditional music.

In various analyses on modern Namibian music (1990 onwards), it is regretted that there seems to be no national musical identity:

> The great musical talent in Namibia at the moment is being drowned by its lack of identity, with the majority of artists latching onto South African, quasi-American, hiphop or reggae music. (Guchu, *New Era,* 2006).

However, it is hard to expect one signatory sound to represent all the various linguistic and cultural groupings in Namibia. Oshiwambo-speaking artists experiment with all the various genres mentioned above. However, kwaito is still the most common style practiced in Oshiwambo. Due to its vast popularity, I will expand on the kwaito genre.

Kwaito

Kwaito is generally classified as a type of pop music with lyrics spoken over an instrumental backing usually consisting of slowed-down house music layered with African percussion and melodies.[6]

It emerged in the South African ghettos of Soweto, Johannesburg, in the early 1990s. Kwaito has been described as an "urban soup" of South African jazz, township pop, mixed with the African diaspora's hip-hop, dub, American jazz, UK house, mbaqanga, dancehall, and disco music and carries a "four to the floor" disco/house beat. Musical influences thus hail from the U.S. and Europe, infused with local roots, which can be heard in the use of synthesized marimba and in the use of vernacular poetry. In South African

[6] www.thefreedictionary.com/kwaito

terms, the lyrics are sung mostly in "Tsotsitaal" which is a mix of English, Zulu, Xhosa, Afrikaans and street slang spoken in the townships. Namibia has followed that trend. Oshiwambo is mixed with words from any language (mainly English and Afrikaans) that may fit the rhyming scheme or message that is to be carried out through slang.

Kwaito is signified by the lyrics being shouted, blabbered, and/or chanted. Most of the songs feature a call and response. The call is typically performed by males and the response by females. To my knowledge there are no female kwaito artists in Namibia, although there are female rappers belonging to the hiphop genre. Both kwaito and Afro-pop are unthinkable without dancers and specific dance moves involved.

Kwaito has become a cultural phenomenon representing the post-apartheid township generation of South Africa and Namibia. Through dress, appearance, language, ritual occasions, and styles of music a unity is formed which then defines the group's public identity.[7]

Kwaito has brought forth some of Namibia's most popular artists including Gazza, The Dogg, Exit, Mushe, and the like.

The street language of kwaito is in contrast to "deep Oshikwanyama", which is a "pure, rooted, traditional and undiluted" form of the language.[8] Sally is one of the artists who signified she consciously writes in "deep dialect". Speaking pure dialect means sticking to the rules of the language and not mixing it with other dialects of the same language, let alone infusing it with words from foreign languages. This pure vocabulary is also signified as "much larger and deeper" than the urban version(s) of Oshiwambo. Most of the vocabulary and sayings of these "pure, deep" dialects refer to objects and activities particular to traditional living. Since these objects and activities are disappearing, so are the use of these words and sayings. The change in lifestyle through urbanization and globalization is changing the Oshiwambo language. This can be seen as a natural process; if certain words and sayings aren't relevant anymore, they disappear. One is left wondering what will be the musical effect of the changing language?

Fig. 7.6: Gazza

[7] www.thefreedictionary.com/kwaito

[8] Interview with Sally.

Women in Contemporary Music

Minette writes: In older Aawambo musical traditions, the categories of music for men and women are differentiated, but in the different categories there are both soloists and chorus singers. Instrumental music throughout Africa has, however, been a masculine domain, with women only recently beginning to make inroads in this field of music. Not to say that women never played instruments, but like backing singers, women's instrument playing was commonly relegated to backing in terms of role and technique. Drums were, in the past, too imbued with spiritual and sexual power to allow women ("impure" because of menstrual cycles and childbirth) to play them. In most societies women played various rattles and scrapers and other non-tonal idiophones. In southern Africa, however, with large portions of the male population being absorbed by mining industries, women began to take over some drumming roles in some communities. Venda as well as Aawambo women can be mentioned as examples of this. In contemporary music one tends to find that solo singers are the main focus. They are the "stars", not their backing singers, who remain anonymous. The question now is: how has this translated into contemporary practice? Are women part of the solo-singing, guitar-playing, keyboard-playing and technical production teams?

Shishani writes: More than ever before women in urban Oshiwambo-speaking music are making their steps seen, heard and felt in the Namibian music scene. Generally these women are vocalists performing in more electronically produced and performed genres such as RnB, Afro-pop, gospel and house. Famous names in these genres include Sally, Tequilla, and Frieda (from popular ex-duo "Gal Level"). There are few female singers performing shambo, although Tunakie has been representing this genre nationally, winning various awards for the Shambo category at the Namibian Annual Music Awards over the years. Less common are female instrumentalists, although artists like Blossom, Na-Jah and Toshi Haufiku and myself have been representing in the field of singer-songwriters. Since 2013, Ndilimani (SWAPO band) has recently started training their female dancers in instruments, forming the all female band "The Puppies".

Fig. 7.7: Music classes for girls: Ndilimani band members training the ladies of "The Puppies", 2013

From Shishani 's comments, it appears clear that women are only now beginning to make inroads into the starring and decision-making fields long controlled by men in the music industry. They are having to break many social barriers to be able to do this. To move from backing singer line-up – which often consisted of the girlfriends of the main group – to the fronting position of star and instrumentalist. To date recording production, management and promotion still appears to be the fields of men only, but given the strength of the women finding their way into the industry this is likely to change within the near future.

Mention should be made of Shishani (Vranckx). Having decided to return to Namibia, her mother's home country, from her home in Belgium for research, she began to perform locally and participated in local shows, festivals and competitions. Although not fluent in Oshiwambo, Shishani with her guitar performed her quiet compositions, exploring personal feelings and impressions of her birth country. Her popularity locally grew quickly and was cemented when she won "Last Band Standing" in 2013. She made an effort to meet musicians and to use her talents to raise awareness and funds for various charities and, e.g. the Namibian gay movement. Through her research and interviews with so many Namibian musicians, she continues to contribute to the local music scene and to empower other women musicians.

Fig. 7.8: Album cover of "Itaala", debut album by Shishani & the Namibian Tales

8 An Aawambo Musical World: a Theoretical Position

In order to place the preceding information within a theoretical framework, the following analysis serves as a basis. Cultural analysis is, however, a political minefield since many traditions might be "invented" through social and political interventions. Yet one can feel the inner calling of the existence of a sound and value-based system, whatever the reasons for its existence. According to Hobsbawm and Ranger,[1] an invented tradition is

> [A] set of practices, normally governed by overtly or tacitly accepted rules of a ritual or symbolic nature, which seek to inculcate certain values and norms of behaviour by repetition, which automatically implies continuity with the past.

But traditions are in fact flexible and fluid and can be changed to suit a current purpose, such as one can see in the postcolonial developments of Aawambo music. As Hobsbawm and Ranger (ibid.) point out, since carriers of tradition are also the creators of tradition, they (and this includes performing artists) are the agents who use this resource to shape or influence current outcomes – contemporary music, dance and drama. This can be seen in the ways dancers and poets are currently changing and adapting what they perceive as their traditions.

From the information and views discussed in previous chapters we can begin to form deductions.

Firstly, it is clear that musical cultures are always in a process of change, being renewed and refreshed. In other words, building new music and dances out of the old or existing forms. At the same time, cultural customs and traditions provide a rootedness, a sense of stability, a created identity and are therefore the place to which artists (and others) return to find themselves and strengthen their personal cultural identities. The past acts as a pool into which artists dip to find resources for their creativity. This return to original culture is often seen as a form of going back to roots.

Secondly, from the preceding chapters we see that musical practice is a highly organized and diverse human endeavour. Music is created to fill certain human, social purposes. This implies a social organisation to cognitively shape practice to purpose. The clearest way in which to perceive the high levels of individual and social cognition that precedes musical creation, one needs to look at the manner(s) in which such practices are categorised. This categorisation applies to all musical creation and the resultant performance – whether for concert hall, music industry or celebrating a harvest. There is

[1] Hobsbawm and Ranger, 1994, p. 1

a purpose or reason, and the purpose needs to be fulfilled by providing the "right" kind of music. Using the term "right" indicates a set of related values – what is "right"? Therefore we can say that musical practices are guided by social and personal value systems. Let us look at this in more detail.[2]

Musical Categories

To understand how people categorise their music, one needs to know about their ways of life, their customs and beliefs (cosmology) and history, as described briefly in Chapter 1. Songs, dances and complex events are organised into different categories that are both social and musical. There exists a "sociality" of meaning that emerges from people's response to their everyday physical world as well as their sound world which includes the distinctive, complex forms of social meaning embedded in sound,[3] including language. The most fundamental cultural practices are a response to the challenges of a physical world, but there are also social and psychological challenges that spark musical solutions. These basic social-musical solutions become "solidified" into broad categories of performance over time, yet are constantly in processes of change. For example, basic musical performance categories amongst Oshiwambo-speakers that are observable, even to an outsider, are related to the following *social purposes* (see Chapter 1 for more details): celebrations (weddings, births, harvests, cattle welfare); religion; work (livestock chores, daily chores, agricultural chores); recreation (all the forms of playing); psychological expression (loneliness, readiness for war, confidence, and travelling songs).

Such categories above are common to many cultures across the world. However, it is a characteristic of categories that they are mutually exclusive. In other words, *if something belongs to one category, it cannot also belong to another.*[4] A dedicated funeral song cannot also be a wedding song. On the other hand, there are certain songs that can be sung on several different occasions, e.g., *oyiimbo yuudhano*. Such songs are a generic type of song. The broad categories are further refined into sub-categories we can call repertoires or types.

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2 For an extensive analysis of this phenomenon and the way it emerges from and impacts upon learning, the reader is referred to Mans, 2009.

3 The social realism approach of e.g. Durkheim.

4 For example, something cannot be a fruit as well as a root vegetable at the same time.

Repertoires

Sub-categories (repertoires) are based on musical rather than social qualities. Musical categories or repertoires are organised according to musical qualities that relate to the *meaning* content of music. This dictates how the music is structured in terms of tempo, melodic and tonal qualities, forms and timbre and thus a certain repertoire may tend to be quick or slow, happy or mournful, serious or playful, and so on. Therefore, entertainment repertoires tend to have strong qualities of play, fun, and energy built into them, while songs related to chores tend to have repetitious rhythms and chanting to ease the repetitive task. These qualities of music are built into the different types of song so that most songs of that type will have similar qualities. Local terminology can give one an indication of the types of songs (repertoires) that exist in that community. See, for example, the list below, naming some Ndonga repertoires:

Iiyimbo: (pl.) songs
Iiyimbo yokuhika ondjupa: Songs for shaking milk to make butterfat
Iiyimbo shokakukula: Songs for stamping grain
Iiyimbo shokakungungu: Songs for hoeing
Iiyimbo sholuvalo: Songs for birth
Iiyimbo wokulimaIiyimbo yaalumentu: Songs for men
Iiyimbo yaanona yokwinyanyudha: Songs for children (for entertainment)
Iiyimbo yokambulumbumbwa: Songs for braced, resonated musical bow
Iiyimbo yokashandja: Songs for lamellophone
Iiyimbo yokawagawaga: Songs for unbraced scraped mouth-resonated musical bow
Iiyimbo yokekango lyomongwa: Songs for fetching salt at salt pan, loneliness songs
Iiyimbo yoludhilu: Songs for moving from an old homestead to new
Iiyimbo yoohango: Songs for weddings, ohango
Iiyimbo yuudhano: Songs for playing uudhano
Iiyimbo yoomeme yopashigwana: Songs for women (specifically Ndonga women)
Iiyimbo yuukongo: Songs for hunting
Uuimbilo: (pl.) songs for happiness (not for work)
Uuimbilo wenyanyu lyuunona uyali: Songs for birth of twins
Uuyimbilo wokuloolola uunona: Songs for soothing infants
Uuyimbilo wontanto: Songs for praising
Uuyimbilo wuupongo: Songs for loneliness, can also be performed during wedding to bid bride farewell

Some repertoires may be complementary, in that more than one repertoire type can be sung at an occasion. For instance, travelling music and loneliness music. The song types are commonly recognized as being different, yet they may be sung on the same occasion. Similarly, the large category of recreational music that includes several different repertoires played, for example, at full moon occasions.

So, seasonal festivals such as harvests are celebrated by a repertoire (collection) of songs that belong to the harvesting category. The breaking down of an old homestead and building a new one (*egumbo epe)* has its own repertoire of songs. The wonderful thing is that these song types are easily recognizable by members of the culture through their musical qualities and words. This indicates a deeply embedded music education, even if no formal lessons are taught. People who are members of the culture are able to recognize e.g. a harvest song even when it is sung out of context, *not* at a harvest festival.

The reasons that allow such recognition comprise musical qualities as well as deeply embedded meanings in certain songs. For example, harvest festivals celebrate the centrality of Kalunga [5] who controls time, the flow of nature and thus the harvest. This might not be obvious to an outsider, but is acknowledged as an integral part of the meaning by cultural practitioners. Harvest is officially announced by the king when his fields are ready for harvest. The king's fields are harvested first and then there is celebration. After that, people may harvest their own fields. During this period communality is strengthened by doing things together as people harvest, winnow and store the grain. It is expected of all able members of the community to assist. Thus, another embedded meaning and value relates to communality. Hence, within a simple song there are all these additional (non-musical) notions: being grateful to Kalunga for ensuring a good harvest, respect for the king, communal work effort.

Sally, a contemporary urban singer, describes the musical qualities that give Aawambo music its distinctive sound, as follows:

> What I love about our traditional singing is: how did they make nothing sound like something? It was different. I had to decode that and find a way to make it sound like something you could relate to. Because if I'd find somebody from Europe to listen to it, they'd think it's noise, if you're not listening with the right ear…Because it's like three songs in one, it's just not coming together. But for an Oshiwambo-speaking person it's music. Because that melody going there, well, there's a reason why it's going there! There's a reason why the response is the way it is. So it's music because you understand. It's who you are. But it's tricky for some of us who were born here [in Windhoek] because they haven't found a way to decode it and absorb it. With the world changing, it may sound like noise, but it's our music. (Sally, interviewed by Shishani, 2013.)

[5] Supreme God.

What Sally has explained so engagingly here are that those peculiarly musical qualities set all musical cultures apart. She mentions "three songs in one". Is she referring to the parallel melodies ? She mentions the response, and where the melody is going (the progression), as well as the fact that music contains aspects of an identity for an Oshiwambo-speaking person. The small differences in the ways humans perform give us our identities, and help us to tell one type of music apart from another. Just as kwaito sounds different from gospel, Aawambo music sounds different from neighbouring Ovahimba and Vakwangali music. These differences lie in the *micro-organisation of musical sound* that in each musical culture has developed over a long period of time, and is embedded in lifestyle and value systems.

Micro-organisation of Aawambo Sound Practices

The detailed structure of music can be referred to as the theory of a specific music – the general rules that guide its composition. We are talking about the shared knowledge within a cultural group of how sounds should be put together in subordinate categories as musical shapes and forms.[6] I am referring here to detailed musical qualities such as tempo, rhythm, tone qualities and their combinations, instrumental timbre,[7] and movement qualities. Within Aawambo musical culture, there is a tacit knowledge of *how* to perform, listen to, and create sounds, as well as *what* to perform, and *when* it is appropriate.

Let's take the example of generic types of iidhano and ongovela to analyse and compare some musical features. Both these song types are organised with a caller and chorus response (discussed in earlier chapters). See song examples in Chapter 9.

Tonal qualities: Iidhano are sung by children or women, and usually demand high, clear voices, while ongovela for cattle are usually sung by men, mostly in a high clear voice, that to me has a mournful quality to it. Iidhano, on the other hand, has a "happier" sound (to me). Why? Because they are set in different tone systems. Iidhano, especially those of children, are mostly sung in what sounds very much like a major scale, with a slight tendency to equalise the tones heptatonically. Ongovela usually have a descending soloist *melodic* pattern in what sounds like a "minor" key, but is not. The example in Chapter 9 is mainly in Bb major. This tends to progress from the 4th tone (sub-Dominant (IV) or fah) descending through and back to the 3rd of the Tonic (I) to the Dominant, and thus the entire song seems to hang between IV and V, creating a sense of "hanging". This

6 Mans, 2009, 70–76.

7 The sound quality that is formed by an instrument's shape, size or construction material.

structure, along with a slow tempo, produces a kind of solemnity (to the Western-trained ear). The repeated use of the 4th tone (E*b*) by the soloist is unusual and characterises this type of song. Further, the song ends on the G minor tonic, thereby confusing the issue. Clearly, ongovela "theory" should be analysed on its own grounds rather than by Western musical stereotypes.

Melodic intervals are typically small – in thirds and seconds – in both kinds of songs. Voices typically combine *harmonically* in parallel thirds[8] or sixths[9] for iidhano as is common in this northern region. In ongovela the responses move to emphasised cadential endings, either towards the relative major dominant, or the minor tonic.

Rhythmic patterns for these two types of song are very different, as one would expect since they have a different purpose: uudhano is for entertainment mainly and is danced, while ongovela is at root a form of praise. These differences determine both rhythm and tempo. Understandably, group dance requires an emphasised rhythm pattern (repeated by hands, feet and drum), while praise – a reflective, meaning-laden genre – lays more emphasis on the text itself, with rhythm following individualised texts above the solemn tempo. Like other types of Aawambo song, sets of three (as in 6/8, 12/8 and ¾) are very common, although more modern songs are in multiples of four, especially contemporary urban music. Ongovela is generally sung in a "free" rhythmic form, with a typically *slow tempo*. Iidhano, by contrast, have a *rapid succession* of pulses, organised in sets of twos and threes, often alternating, picked out by the rhythmic clapping of hands foot stamps and drum beats. The rhythm is a fundamental and characteristic musical quality of this genre, as shown by the numbers of descriptive words: *eempandu* (clapping rhythms, *-pand* = clap), *omandengo* (clapped or beaten rhythm), o*kudhenga omake kumwe, okuhakela* (to clap), *eempi* (clapping hands), *okwakela* (clapping), *omandondi* (songs for clapping, stamping of feet, no dance), *okututula* (to stamp feet), o*mudengi wokongoma* (beater of drum in uudhano), and so on.

Movements: Iidhano are dance-play songs and involve a succession of rapid, rhythmic stamps of the flat foot to the ground, and sweeps of the free foot to the side (to kick up dust). Arms are raised, bent at the elbow, with palms facing open and forwards. Heads might perform a stylish little shake or snap. The men's ongovela performance, by contrast, is often fairly static for long periods, but interspersed with stamping steps similar to those

8 Two tones, separated by one degree of the scale.
9 An inverted third.

of the women and girls once they "warm up". The difference is that the stamps of men do not appear as fixed in a pattern as those of the females, and the pattern is of shorter duration. The aim of the men's movements appears to be an emphasis on the text that has been chanted or sung. This is especially pertinent when men are praising their own cattle because they perform movements that represent qualities most favoured in their cattle.

Instruments preferred for iidhano depend on the area and age group. Children all over the northern region use a drum beat that underlays and replicates the foot stamps. Older women eschew the drum in most cases, but use a whistle and switch of cattle or gnu tail to emphasise their movements. Only in cattle ongovela at the large gatherings do men use a musical instrument, namely a flute and sometimes ongongi (harmonica).

From this very brief analysis, one can see that the typical well-known musical patterns are organised very specifically to create the preferred cultural sound. So deeply is this embedded in the "cultural ear", that any mishaps, changes, or over-turnings of this organisation are seen as "wrong, mistaken". These musical sound images and rules are acquired from birth in any community with exposure to music from birth onwards. Naturally, for those born into urban communities with mixed musics, this Aawambo musical imprinting will not take place fully – as Sally says "they'd think it's noise". The result is that some urban musicians seek to find ways to rediscover and embed perceived cultural details into their contemporary popular music, with varying success.

Religious songs such as uukorasa [10] have relinquished many aspects of the traditional Aawambo musical structures still found in some song types for four part harmonies, yet retained melodies in parallel thirds, and thus part of the characteristic tonal quality, since typical Western harmony rules need to be "bent" somewhat to attain the parallel melodies. While many of the older church songs are adaptations of European hymns and also American gospel songs, the changes wrought can be referred to as a process of "indigenisation". Chord structures in many of these church songs and the contemporary electronic music are based on the principal triads of I, IV, V, with the associated minor triads, giving them a Western common practice sound. The three upper voices retain their preference for parallel melodies derived from dance and work songs, while bass voices progress more similarly to Western harmonic practice, usually singing root notes supporting the harmonic structure.

A similar process of adaptation is visible in contemporary Oshiwambo songs that try to retain a sense of "Aawambo-ness". (Female) backing singers sing in parallel motion of thirds, the rhythmic structure retains triple pulses, mostly in compound threes, and some

[10] See Löytty, (2012) and Haugh (2014) for detailed discussions.

songs have long solo phrases that are reminiscent of praise songs, e.g. "Kula Umone" by Set-Son and the Mighty Dreads. Others have shorter solo calls, with shorter, and sometimes overlapping, responses by the female backing singers. This role of females as backing singers is undergoing change (see Chapter 7, p. 131f.) as are melodic contours and structures for female lead singers.

While contemporary church music is still often in triple beats (e.g. ¾), the pulses are in twos (simple time). For dance hall and other popular music the beats have changed to fours because that seems to be a club dancing preference. That being said, Löytty [11] points out that many of the songs sung in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Namibia, are in fact older traditional melodies from more than one language group, to which Bible verses have been adapted. He mentions, e.g., "*Ombwi tayi mbwabwila yokeulu*" being sung with new words (arranged by Kambudu) as "*Omuwa a yumuka*".

So, from this we can see that the micro-organisation of sound is informed by a system of aesthetics.

Aesthetics and Values

Music and other performances are guided by aesthetic values – what people consider appropriate and "good" quality. Aesthetic values are embedded in the societal values of a people. One of the ways that we can tell how a people's aesthetic organisation works is by looking at the names that are given to the sound qualities and which qualities they identify as important. For example, European classical music values "development" of musical ideas making many changes, often demanding solo virtuosity. In most Aawambo songs, on the other hand, repetition is valued, because that allows performers to anticipate what is going to happen next, so dance is possible in a communal setting, where solo virtuosity is only one of the qualities valued.

Applying aesthetic values implies that people have the terminology to analyse or judge the music and then to describe it qualitatively. Some of the terms we found to describe and evaluate performances in Oshiwambo include:

To make (many or good) variations	*Okulundulula*
To sing low	*Okungonena*
To sing loudly, with strength	*Okwiimba pombanda*
Talented people who perform really well	*Omanyakwa*
To clap well, with strength	*Okuhakela*

[11] Löytty, 2012.

To stamp feet with energy, effort	*Omututula nomthindo*
Not talented performers	*Aahenge*, *Aanongo*
Talented performers	*Aasama*
(and so on).	

The fact that many similar terms can be found indicates a system of awareness of performance values, differentiating between better and poorer efforts. At the same time, the idea of *okudana pamwe* – playing together – is of great importance, because together is always considered better than alone. The value of community has, in the past, been more important than the value of "being a star", outshining others in performance. This has clearly undergone a change in urban contemporary music, where almost every young performer wants to be a star, and considers themselves an "artist", even when just starting out and lacking accomplishment. Questions can be raised concerning the social and musical impact of such value changes. Comparing stories amongst the older persons and young singers in earlier chapters illustrates some aspects of this change.

Elsewhere[12] I have written about aesthetics and social values and their influence on the musical sound structure and performance. For example, communal performances for the good of all in the community as the expected norm are being overtaken by individual performances where polish, charisma, and personal fame and fortune are end goals. This might indicate some kind of vacuum developing in the fabric of society. Something that used to be fulfilled by okudana pamwe, now demands (individual) work and payment in cash – a significant and far-reaching value change.

A different, but related, value that influences performances is the notion of play. While this is very important as genre and as mind set in Namibian social traditions, it has lost value in contemporary urban arenas of performance where art becomes work, not play in the older sense. Performances nowadays require much rehearsal, practice over and over, planning, researching, coordinating and financing. This appears to be in conflict with music, dance and stories as play, as recreation on a moonlit night, or Saturday afternoon. There is no fault in working for professionally executed performances, but is there still space, time and expertise for iidhano? And by contrast, are contemporary urban musicians willing to put in the necessary effort and practice needed to attain excellence? In my experience, the carry-over of music as play can act as a deterrent. Young would-be musicians are sometimes reluctant to develop the work ethic needed to become a professional musician. Values act as behavioural and ethical guidelines, based on the beliefs and norms of a society. In performance they not only guide what and how things are done, but also

[12] Mans, 2009.

why. It is here that the fractures of rapidly changing cultures are most noticeable. The future cannot be predicted, but I would venture to suggest that one may expect some of the following changes to happen to Aawambo musical practices in future:

- Melodic structures will become even more "well-tempered" in terms of Western scales than they already are, forsaking the equidistant heptatonic scale of the past for the Western-based diatonic scale;
- Time signatures will tend more towards 4 beats per bar (simple time), since the innate swing of threes and isochronic timelines do not sit as well with urban dance moves and digital music programmes for composing, writing, and recording;
- Communal music-making is almost certain to diminish even further since urbanisation with its time constraints and social structures do not support the easy-going getting together to sing and dance outside in the moonlight. This will impact on the entire musical library of Aawambo heritage;
- The rift between communal performers and "artists" is likely to widen;
- "Folk" (or traditional) dancers will reposition themselves, adapting performance in circles to straight lines and "front"-facing positions so as to accommodate stages and non-participant onlooker audiences;
- Contemporary dances will become increasingly culturally blended in terms of movement style and aesthetic;
- Ceremonies such as olufuko and efundula will become increasingly public and, quite possibly, tourism driven;
- Certain song types, such as ondjupa songs, will most likely lose their efficacy as fewer people engage with such traditional tasks, but might still be sung as purely recreational or educational music;
- Increasingly, stories and poetry will be adapted for stage and theatre;
- The role of namunganga will diminish and if retained, it is likely to become merely ceremonial;
- The roles of the kingdoms and their leaders are themselves contested in modern times and might, of course, cease to exist as traditional leadership holdings. This is uncertain, however, since it appears that there are about as many people on both sides of the argument for and against.

It would be most self-enlightening for people to consider (from the previous chapters) which categories of music remain in existence and which have ceased in practice; which categories still have several songs in their repertoires; which musical practices yet have meaning; which categories may have found new life in contemporary music, thereby replacing the old; and finally, which cultural practices may be relinquished and for which an effort must be made to retain them for their innate value.

While this book has briefly delineated most of the musical categories and types of Aawambo musical heritage, it has only begun to illustrate the vast number of existing repertoires. Ngoma Research Collective and I trust that it will inspire others to continue the gathering and analyzing work.

9 A Collection of Aawambo Songs

The songs contained in this chapter are but a few selected from the many hundreds of songs known to Aawambo. Their inclusion here is to provide a sample for readers of music notation. The notations were originally transcribed by me in a pulse line notation, which I find easier and more accurate for the inclusion of non-Western tonalities, especially for movements. In the notations that follow I have bowed to peer pressure and written the songs in Western common notation since many people are familiar with it. The limits of the computer programmes do, however, limit the symbols and rhythmic potentials for movements severely. The songs should therefore be seen as an approximation and as one possible interpretation, transcribed and analysed from one or a few recordings. This means that songs are not always performed in exactly the same manner, or pitch, or rhythmic content. The notation can be seen as a template that would be recognizable to knowledgeable cultural insiders, but is not the only possibility of expression.

1. The first song, *Nghee de khalya*, is typical of this type of ongovela, and can be repeated or expanded for as long as wished. It was originally recorded and transcribed by the late Sabine Zinke in Kwanza Sul, Angola. I recorded it in Windhoek.

2. *Amuwa*, the second song, is a children's song for uudhano, and one I recorded in more than one place. This seems to indicate its popularity or embeddedness in the western Aawambo regions. Its pace is rapid.

3. *Omutwendi-one ya Maalitsa* and its additions (parts of other songs) is an uudhano song performed by young girls for the independence celebrations of Namibia in 1990, and on similar occasions afterwards. Its rapid quaver tempo for the drum is echoed by the rapid foot stamps.[1]

4. *Tanyanda* was recorded in three different places, performed by different groups of women, and represents adult women's uudhano. It is quite up-tempo.

5. *Iyoyei wei* is another song for women's uudhano, but with a different rhythmic pattern and a slower (more moderate) tempo than Tanyanda. The melodic movement in thirds of the chorus voices is clearly visible.

6. *Natutaleni* is but one sample of the church hymn influenced type of freedom song, by K.A. Uushonga. It was collected and transcribed by Sabine Zinke in the camps during the freedom struggle, as part of her doctoral dissertation donated to UNAM, and re-transcribed by myself in 2014.

[1] See Mans, 1997, for a full description and analysis.

Ongovela (ta di dana)

Traditional

Transcribed by S. Zinke & I. Lazarus

Sing long notes with downward glissando

Slur descending phrases

Solo Tenor

Nghee Nghee

Tenor 1

Nghee da ka - lya Nghee da ka - lya

Tenor 2

Nghee da ka - lya Nghee da ka - lya

Bass

Nghee da ka - lya Nghee da ka - lya

Ee - ndja- ba Ee - ndja - ba

nghee va-ka - ta,omu-ngu-ngu - mo ---- nghee va-ka - ta,omu- ngu-ngu - mo ----

nghee va-ka - ta,omu-ngu-ngu - mo ---- nghee va-ka - ta,omu-ngu-ngu - mo ----

nghee va-ka - ta,omu-ngu-ngu - mo ---- nghee va-ka - ta,omu-ngu-ngu - mo ----

(Ee)ndja-ba,o-ka-he-nge Ee - ndja - ba

Nghee da ka - lya nghee va-ka - ta,omu-ngu-ngu - mo

Nghee da ka - lya nghee va-ka - ta,omu-ngu-ngu - mo

Nghee da ka - lya nghee va-ka - ta,omu-ngu-ngu - mo

3. (Spoken text) Ee - dja - ba

Nghee da ka - lya Nghee da ka - lya

Nghee da ka - lya Nghee da ka - lya

Nghee da ka - lya Nghee da ka - lya

O - ka- he- nge

O - ka - he - nge

nghee va-ka - ta,omu- ngu-ngu - mo ----

nghee va-ka - ta,omu-ngu-ngu - mo ----

nghee va-ka - ta,omu-ngu-ngu - mo ----

nghee va-ka - ta,omu-ngu-ngu - mo ----

nghee va-ka - ta,omu-ngu-ngu - mo ----

nghee va-ka - ta,omu-ngu-ngu - mo ----

4. (Spoken text)

Ee - ndja - ba

Nghee da ka - lya

Nghee da ka - lya

Nghee da ka - lya

Nghee da ka - lya

Nghee da ka - lya

Nghee da ka - lya

O - ka - he - nge

O - ka - he- nge

nghee va-ka - ta,omu- ngu-ngu - mo ----

Nghee da ka - lya

nghee va-ka - ta,omu-ngu-ngu - mo ----

Nghee va-ka - ta,omu- ngu- (mo)

nghee va-ka - ta,omu- ngu-ngu - mo ----

Nghee da ka - lya

Ee - ndja - ba

(Zik!)

Nghee va- ka - ta, omu - ngu- ngu - mo.

Nghee va- ka - ta, omu - ngu- ngu - mo.

Nghee va- ka - ta, omu - ngu- ngu - mo.

Lyrics		Translation
Omutoloki		
1.	Nghee, nghee da kalya	Go away and eat
	Eendjaba,	Elephant
	nghee vakata omungungumo	Go away onto the rainwet grazing
Chorus		
	Eendjaba okahenge	Elephant you have changed
	nghee da kalya	Go away and eat
	Eendjaba,	Elephant
	nghee vakata omungungumo	go away onto the rainwet grazing
2.	(Spoken text)	
	Aweyele ndalile onghoshi yo	Aweyele, I have seen lions
	Kekolongongo yo kondubo,	at Olongongo and at Ondubo,
	Ove nghoshi!	Your lions!
	Ngolo yo konamudidi taili	A zebra that grazes at Onamudidi
	Exupa Kalimbo yo konangolo	is butterfat from
	Likwete oipepe Ndjabei!	Kalimbo!
	Eendjaba,	(as above)
	nghee da kalya	
	Okahenge	
	nghee vakata omungungumo.	
3.	(Spoken text):	
	Aweyele ndalile tumeni okaana	Aweyele, please tell the children
	Kakatale omundilo oku omundilo	they must fetch fire, here the fire is out
	Otaudima Yowela inta ukatale	You, Joel, please go and fetch fire, but
	Omundilo do nee ongobe otadi	it is time to milk the cows.
	Kakandwa Madala endelela.	Madala (unclear) yourself
	Oyaningwa nai komutenga hano?	What is the matter (with the cows)? I'll (strike?) you!
	Eendjaba,	(as above)
	nghee da kalya	
	Okahenge	
	nghee vakata omungungumo.	
4.	Okahenge,	You have changed
	nghee da kalya	go away to eat
	Eendjaba,	Elephant
	Nghee vakata omungungumo.	Go away onto the rainwet grazing.

Amuwa

Traditional
Recorded and transcribed by M.E. Mans

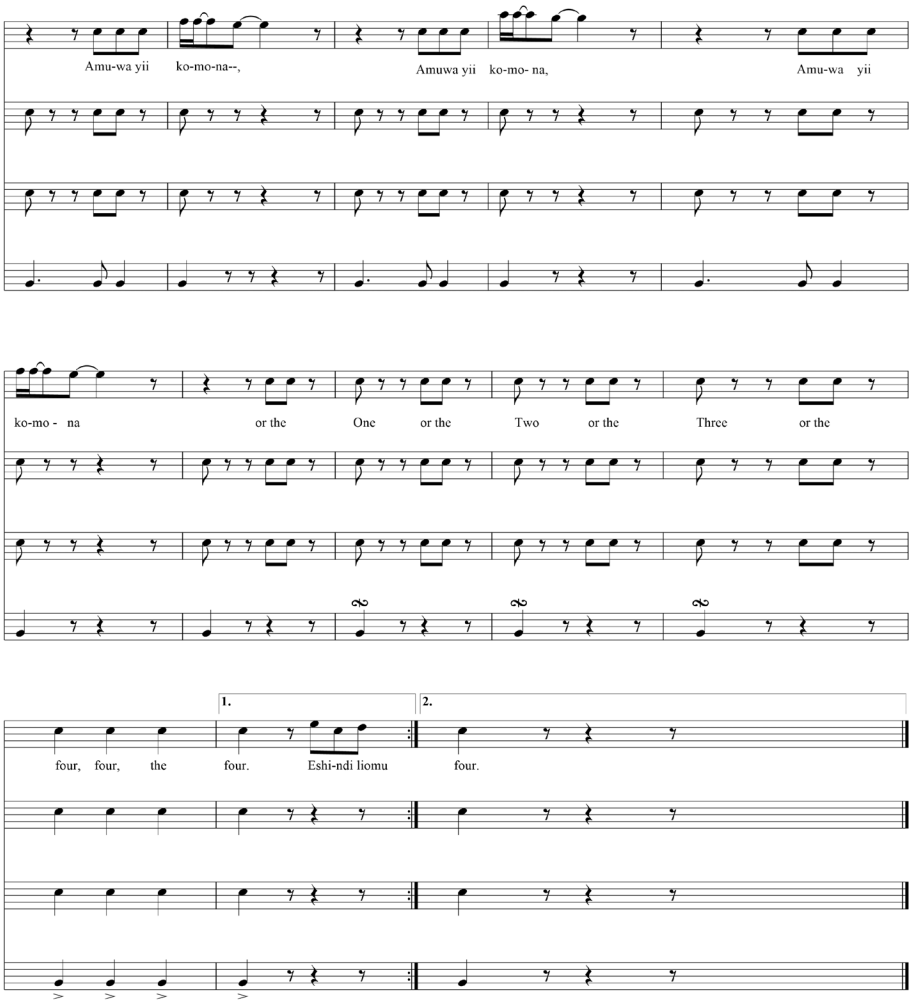
Voices
Clapping
Drum
Dance steps

Eshi-ndi liomu tumba kon-djembo -- --

Andi-dhi-la dhi-la oshi-gwa- na--- Eshi-ndi-liomu tum-ba kon-djembo --- Andi-dhi-la

dhi-la oshi-gwa- na.--- Eshi-ndi-liomu tum-ba kon-djembo -- Andi-dhi-la dhi-la oshi-gwa-

na--. Eshi-ndiliomu tum-ba kon-djem-bo --- Andi dhi-la dhi-la oshi-gwa- na.--- Amu-wa yii ko-mo-na --,



Lyrics

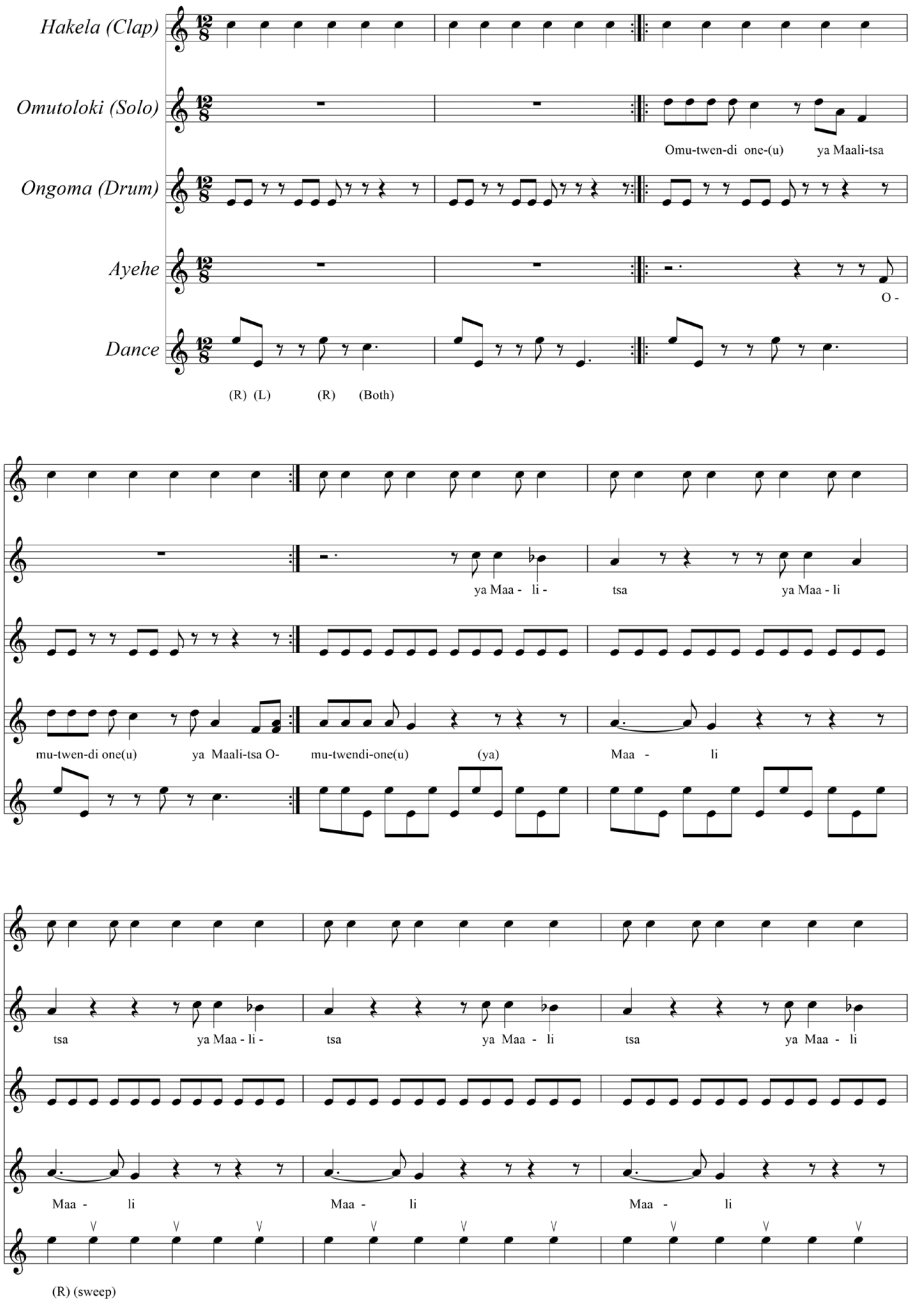
Eshi ndi lyomu tumba kondjembo
Andi dhila dhila oshigwana (about 5 times)
Amuwa yii komona (4 times)
Or the one, or the two,
Or the three,
Or the four, four, the four.

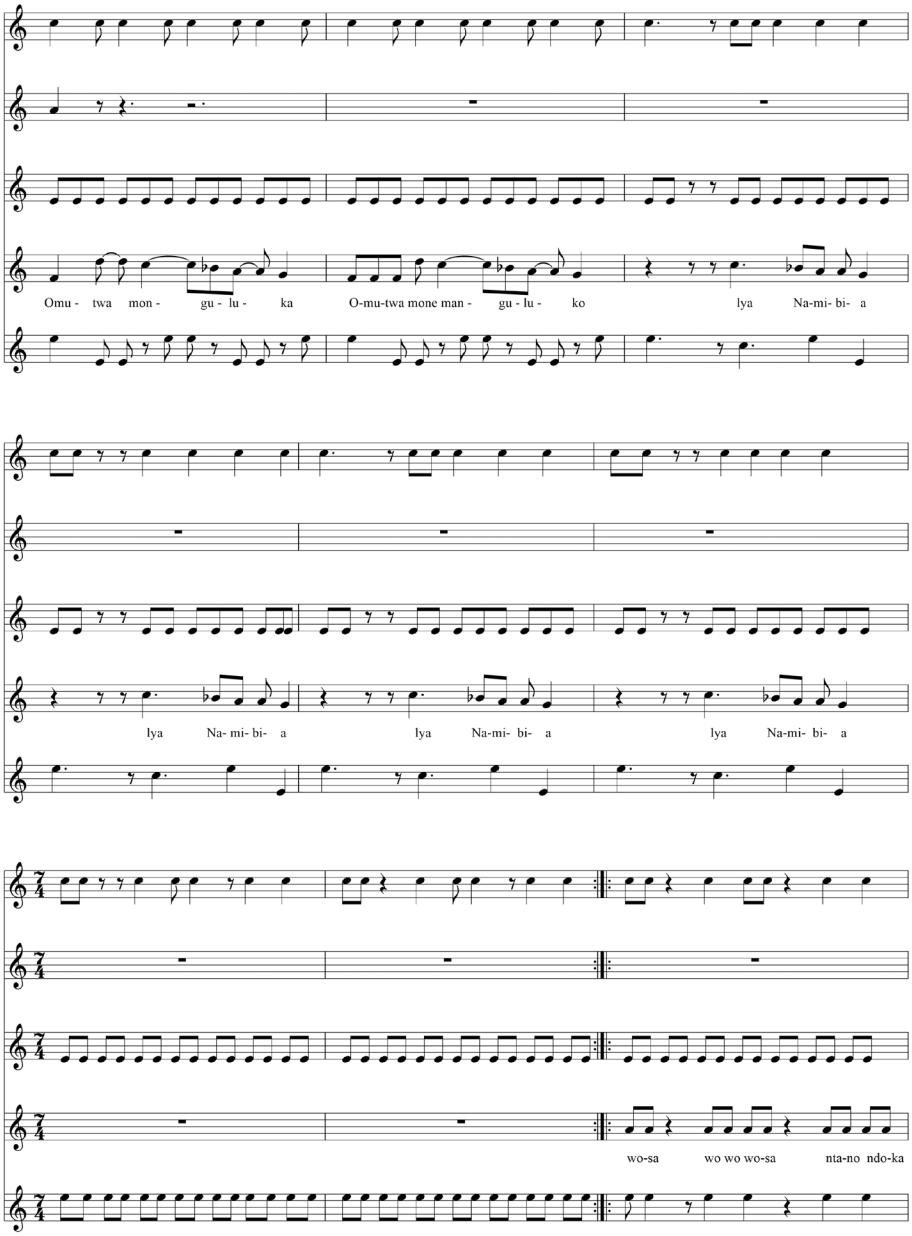
Translation

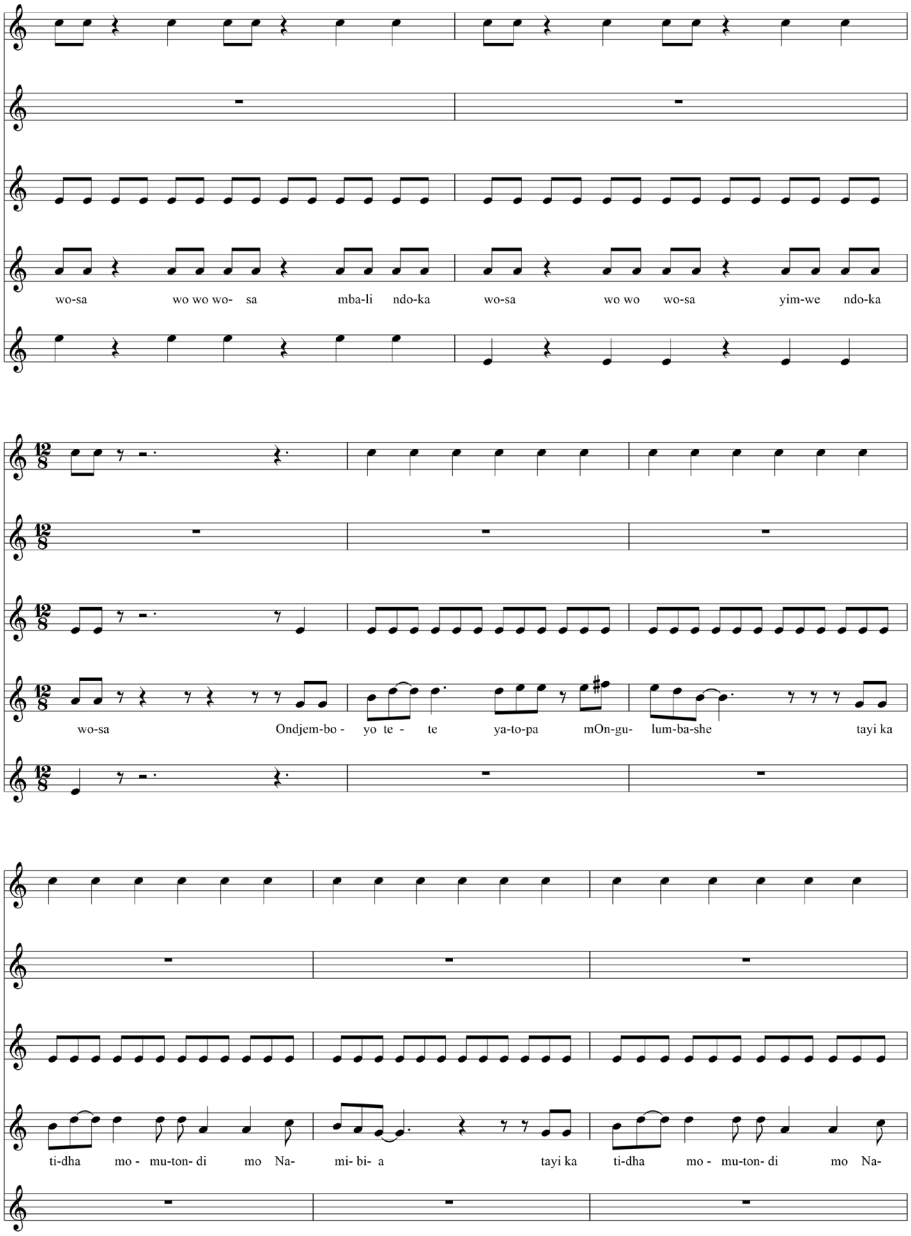
While I am sitting on top of the gun (referring to tall anthills)
Thinking about the nation
Where the PLAN is going
They are talented shooters of Namibia
Or the one, or the two,
or the three, or the four, four, the four

Omutwendi-one ya Maalitsa

Traditional
Text by I. Shivolo
Transcribed by M. E. Mans




Omu - twa mon - gu - lu - ka O-mu-twa mone man - gu - lu - ko lya Na-mi- bi- a
lya Na- mi- bi- a lya Na-mi- bi- a lya Na-mi- bi- a
wo-sa wo wo wo-sa nta-no ndo-ka


wo-sa wo wo wo- sa mba-li ndo-ka wo-sa wo wo wo-sa yim-we ndo-ka
wo-sa Ondjem-bo - yo te - te ya-to-pa mOn-gu- lum-ba-she tayi ka
ti-dha mo - mu-ton- di mo Na- mi- bi- a tayi ka ti-dha mo - mu-ton- di mo Na-

mi-bi- a Ondjem-bo- yo te - te ya-to-pa mOngu - lum-ba-she tayi ka

ti-dha mo - mu- ton- di mo Na - mi - bi - a tayi ka ti-dha mo - mu- ton- di mo Na-

mi- bi - a

Lyrics

Omutwendi-one ya Maalitsa
Ya Maalitsa
Omutwa manguluko
Lya Namibia
Wosa wosa nano ndoka
Wosa Wosa mbali ndoka
Wosa wosa yimwe ndoka
Wosa
Ondjembo yo tete yatopa mOngulumbashe
Tayi ka tidha momutondi Namibia
Tayi ka tidha momutondi Namibia
Ondjemboyo tete yatopa mOngulumbashe
Tayi ka tidha momutondi Namibia
Tayi ka tidha momutondi Namibia

Translation

Twenty-one March
March
We pound (beat out) freedom
for Namibia
Rise rise that distance
Rise rise that two
Rise rise that (?)
Rise
The first rifle shots were fired at Ongulumbashe
A stick to chase away Namibian enemies
The first rifle shots were fired at Ongulumbashe
A stick to chase away Namibian enemies

Tanyanda

Traditional

Recorded and transcribe by M. E. Mans (1999)

Clapping

Feet

Solo Voice

Chorus

Segno

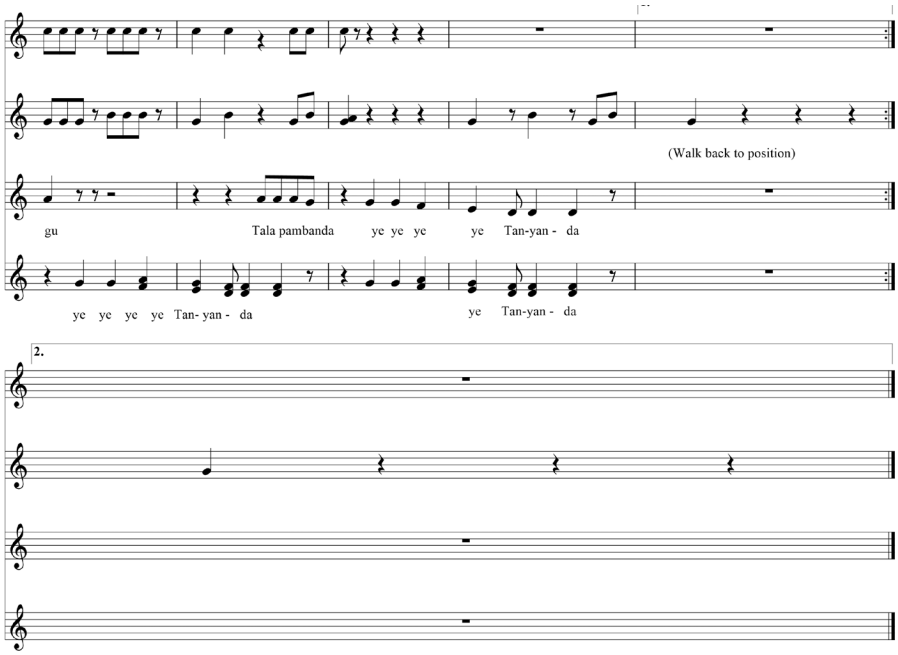
Wei - yo - ye ye Tan - yan -- da

ondhi-lo-ne - ne Ndeyi pa-le- lo ka- pa- le

Ne-lom-bee ye ye Tan-yan - da Ye ye ye ye Tan - yan- da Ye ye ye

Ondhi-lo ne - ne Mukwe - ni - ta -

ye Tan-yan - da ye ye ye ye Tan-yan - da ye ye ye ye Tan- yan - da



Lyrics

Omutoloki:

Weiyoye, Tanyanda
Ondhil'onene
Mukweni tagu
Tala pambanda

Chorus:

Nelombe, ye ye Tanyanda
Ye ye ye ye Tanyanda
Ye ye ye ye Tanyanda
Ye ye ye ye Tanyanda

Alternate text in Ombalanhu:

Weiyoye Tanyanda
Ovila'onene Nelombe Tanyanda
Twei palela okapale
Ino omuvumo gomvula
Ngo mwaaba wa Kalunga

Translation of Oshimbalanhu text:

The aeroplane Nelombe (name)
We build an airport for it
With a roar like rainfall
When big black clouds
Are covering the sky (like gods)

(The term Tanyanda refers to playing with the head to keep time to the music)

Iyoyei wei yoye

Traditional
Collected and transcribed by M. E. Mans
Recorded and translated by I. Shivolo

Hakela (Clap)

Omutoloki (Solo)

Iyo - yo wei ye yo yo yo yo yo ye wei, I -yo

Ayehe (Chorus)

Hakela (Clap 2)

yo wei ye ye - e ----------

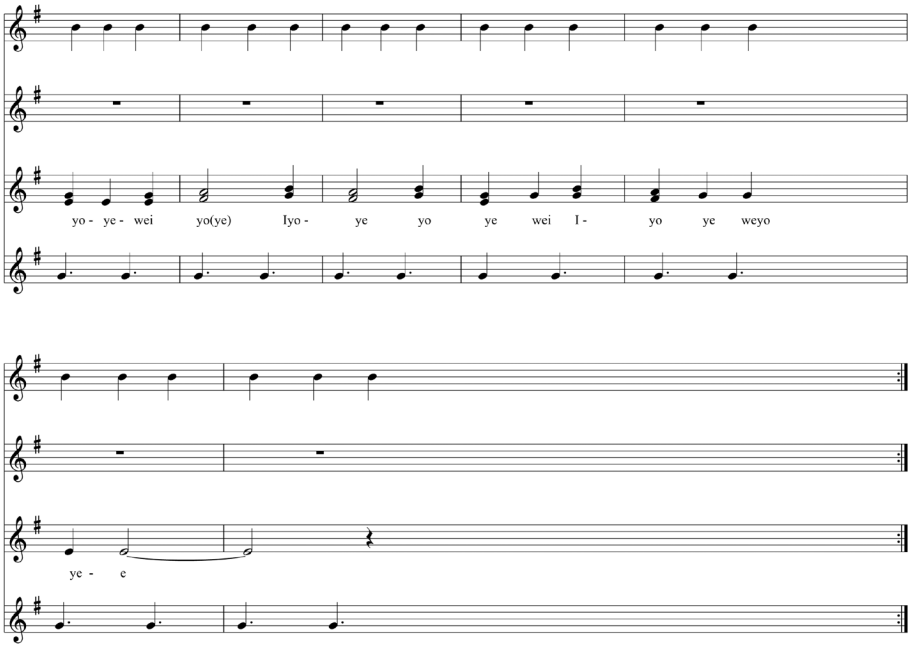
I - yo ye wei yo yo -

E-si- ku-lye ti - ta(tu) Otu-na

ye yo - ye wei I - yo yo ye - ee ----------

omu-le - le mOn-don - ga Yoma-lo-li taa twa(la) Kam-ba mba ota- li kan-ge - na ee ----------

I -


yo - ye - wei yo(ye) Iyo - ye yo ye wei I - yo ye weyo
ye - e

Lyrics

Omutoloki:
Iyoye wei yoye
Esiku lyetitatu otuna omulele mOndonga
Yomaloli taa twala
Kamba mba otali ka ngena ee

Onda li kepata
Onda li hai teleke
Nda dipaya ko etiti
Handi yi koshoto

Onda tengula okapundi eee
Hai pi kempadi
Ondilo
Ondeu dimapo eeee
Hai ti tuminike
Onyala onde yi teyakweeee
Hai mot u hupite
Omulungu deu lumatakweeee
(many more verses)

Ayehe:
Iyoye wei yoye

Iyoye wei yoye (etc.)

Translation (by I. Shivolo)

Iyoye wei yoye (Love of the youth)

Wednesday we overnight at Ondangwa
Buses transported (us)
Buses had gone
I was at the kitchen
I was cooking
I smashed the clay bowl
I went also to oshoto (where the men and boys stay at night)
I bumped myself against the chair
My foot landed in the fire
I set off the fire
I asked someone to shake hands
I broke his finger
I asked him to kiss
I bit his lips off
(etc.)

Natutaleni

Namibian Freedom Song

K. A. Uushunga
in S. Zinke (1991)

Soprano 1
Na-tu-ta - le - ni lu-he-po ye- na

Soprano 2
tu - ta - le - ni ya kwe-tum - bo oi - hu -

Alto
tu - ta - le - ni ya kwe-tum - bo oi - hu -

Tenor
tu - ta - le - ni ya kwe-tum - bo oi - hu -

Baritone
tu - ta - le - ni ya kwe-tum - bo oi - hu -

Mo-do - lo - ngo ye-li ta-ya mo - no,

na ta- ya - mo - no ta- ya de - ngwa ta-ya mo - no,

na ta- ya - mo - no ta- ya de - ngwa ta-ya mo - no,

na ta- ya - mo - no ta- ya de - ngwa ta-ya mo - no,

na ta- ya - mo - no ma-den-go, ta- ya de - ngwa I- hu- na, ta-ya mo - no,lu- he- po

veli- le - mo --- Mo - lwa Na-mi - bi - a Mo - lwa Na-mi - bi - a ----

veli- le - mo --- Mo - lwa Na-mi - bi - a Mo - lwa Na-mi - bi - a ----

veli- le - mo --- Mo - lwa Na-mi - bi - a Mo - lwa Na-mi - bi - a ----

veli- le - mo --- Mo - lwa Na-mi - bi - a Mo - lwa Na-mi - bi - a ----

veli- le - mo --- Mo - lwa Na-mi - bi - a Mo - lwa Na-mi - bi - a ----

Lyrics

Verse 1
Solo:
Natutaleni,
Luhepo yena,
Modolongo yeli,
taya mono, velile mo.
Molwa Namibia
Molwa Namibia.

Chorus:
(Na)tutaleni yakwetu mbo
oihuna taya mono,
(madengo) taya dengwa,
(Ihuna) taya mono, velile mo.
Molwa Namibia
Molwa Namibia.

Translation

We see, see our countrymen
they suffer, live in misery
They are imprisoned
are punished, punished
have difficulties, misery,
live in terror.
Cry Namibia!

Abbreviations

ELCIN	Evangelical Lutheran Church in Namibia
NAN	National Archive of Namibia
NBC	Namibian Broadcasting Corporation
PLAN	People's Liberation Army of Namibia
SA	South Africa
SABC	South African Broadcast Corporation
SADF	South African Defence Force
SWABC	South West African Broadcasting Corporation
SWATF	South West African Territorial Force
SWAPO	South West Africa People's Organisation
UNAM	University of Namibia
Sng.	Singular
Pl.	Plural
Lit.	Literally

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Glossary of Performance-related Terms Gathered during Field Research

Certain terms listed below will be classed as general "Oshiwambo" terms. The rest will list terms in the specific dialect-language. Keep in mind that the linguistic division between dialects is normally between Oshindonga and Oshikwanyama. However, since there are clear differences as well as similarities among the different regional dialects, they will be spelt out separately here.

General "Oshiwambo" terms

Aveshe	Chorus
Eempandu	Clapping rhythms
Eenghama	Traditional dance game for men
Eenhumbu	Play song – mother and child
Efiti	Ankle rattles
Efungu	Horsetail switch used in dance
Eheudololo	Repeat
Ehokololo	Story, tale
Eimbilo	Song
Ekola	(sng.) Calabash drum; scraped idiophone with carved wooden bottom and calabash resonator
Eli pamwe	Together, communal
Enghongolo	Concussion staves
Enghono	Wood used for bow
Enghuma	End blown kudu or cattle horn
Engombe ta di dana	Cattle dance
Epoli	End blown flute without finger holes, cylindrical or conical
Epupi	Children's dance play
Esasi	Rattle (used in spiritual healing?)
Evuvuu	Bullroarer, whurwhur
Ewi	Melody
Hatuligola	Crying, screaming, wailing
Oka- (prefix)	Small
Okauta	Small bow with or without resonator
Manguluka	Freedom
Mokule	Loud, big
Ndapandula	I thank you, clapping
Odila	Bullroarer
Ohaihokua	Drum builder
Oiti yomandobo	Wooden necklace worn by oihanangolo
Okahumba	Mouthbow or mouth organ
Okakola	Small resonated bow
Okasandji	Lamellophone
Okati	Wooden bow
Okudana pamwe	To play together
Okudenga	To ring
Okudhenga	To beat
Okudhenga omake kumwe	To clap (beating) hands
Okufuko	To blow the wedding horn
Okutana	To call, or whoop, also musical ornaments in singing by men(especially at weddings)
Okutanta	To make emphatic shouts
Okututula	To stamp feet (in dance)
Okwizizimwa	Hummed melody
Oluhoni	Stick for striking bow string

Oluimba	Song
Omalugo	Kitchen
Omalutu	Body drum
Oluvinga	Horn
Olwiimba	Choir, choir singing
Omakola	(pl.) Scraped double calabash bow – used in efundula and healings
Omaimbilo	Song
Omaimbilo gopashigwana	Traditional song
Omandengo	Rhythm, e.g. clapped rhythmic pattern
Omindo	Calabash rattle
Omudengi wokongoma	Drummer (female) in oudano, lit. beater of drum
Omuhelo	Type of men's chant, has a warrior-like sound
Omuiingidi	Solo, beginner of song
Omuleli	Soothing song/sounds for baby
Omulongelo	Support (accompaniment?)
Omutameki	Lead singer, beginner of song
Omwilwa	Flutes for calling cattle
Omwimbi	Solo singer in dance group/oudano
Ondanisa	Dance
Ondigola	Ululation
Ongalilo	Kwanyama endblown flute
Ongowele (ongowela)	Melody
Ongundu ayishe	Choir/chorus
Oniya	Horn
Ontunda	Ndonga drum
Oontanto	Men's dance
Oshende	Dance for women and girls
Oshidano shokadona	Dance-play for girls
Oshidano showamati	Dance-play for boys
Oshiimbo sheendina	Hoeing songs
Oshiimbo shoihanangolo	Songs for "ash maidens" (oihanangolo)
Oshikuti	Stick for striking musical bow string
Oshilwa	Whistle / pipe
Oshiva	Horn
Oshihamo	Praise songs for cattle
Oshini	Mortar
Otete	1st voice
Oudano wofika	Girls' dance-play, "standing dance" in place

Oshindonga terms

Aakuusinda	Clan from which male and female namungangas came
Aakwankala	Term for Bushman slaves of Ndonga people, divided into aakwaga and aakwanayipeta; also a name of a totemic clan of Aandonga
Aazimini	Response group of singers
Dhana	Play, dance
Egumbo epe	New house
Eimbilo	Song
Ekango lyomongwa	Salt pan
Elongo	Triplets
Eluko lyokanona	Naming newborn infants
Engholo	Male singing game performed during full moon play
Epaha	Twins
Epaha tali sindulwa	Ceremony for naming twins

Ependa	Brave person
Epole	String of beads worn diagonally over shoulder, during the traditional wedding ceremony (ohango)
Etenda	Men's songs
Etenda lyAandonga	Men's songs, part of the iiyimbo yaalumentu, specific to Ndonga
Etenda noshende	Songs for marula alcohol, performed at the King's royal home
Etsali	Ceremony place, in ohango refers to leafy huts for aafuko; now the area in front of a married woman's rooms, for receiving guests
Ihoyontali	Chaperone /accompanying relative of omufuko/witness
Iimba!	Sing!
Iidhano	(pl.) generic dance-play (uudhano), e.g. *iidhano iyopa mothigu lulwa kalo*
Iigwanga	Herbs/fruit added to the omahangu meal by namunganga on the second day of ohango, eaten as a test for pregnancy
Iikalakala	Foot (ankle) rattle used in ohango dance
Iiyimbo	(pl.) songs
Iiyimbo yokuhika ondjupa	Songs for shaking milk to make butterfat
Iiyimbo shokakukula	Songs for stamping grain
Iiyimbo shokakungungu	Songs for hoeing
Iiyimbo sholuvalo	Songs for birth
Iiyimbo wokulimaIiyimbo yaalumentu	Songs for men
Iiyimbo yaanona yokwinyanyudha	Songs for children (for entertainment)
Iiyimbo yokambulumbumbwa	Songs for braced, resonated musical bow
Iiyimbo yokashandja	Songs for lamellophone
Iiyimbo yokawagawaga	Songs for unbraced scraped mouth-resonated musical bow
Iiyimbo yokekango lyomongwa	Songs for fetching salt at salt pan, loneliness songs
Iiyimbo yoludhilu	Songs for moving from an old homestead to new
Iiyimbo yoohango	Songs for weddings, ohango
Iiyimbo yuudhano	Songs for playing uudhano
Iiyimbo yoomeme yopashigwana	Songs for women (specifically Ndonga women)
Iiyimbo yuukongo	Songs for hunting
Iweleng endye	Half flooded salt pan
Izizimwa	Hum, sing with closed mouth, without words
Hakela	Hand-clapping
Kuungumene	Month before the rains which determine the date for ohango/December
Lwongombe	Butterfat and root mixture applied to hair for ohango
Namunganga	Master of ohango, master of salt collection
Ohambo	Cattle post
Ohango	Previously traditional initiation/transitional ceremony for women, nowadays refers to a Christian wedding
Ohango yanamunganga	Master of ohango, with whom aafuko stay during traditional wedding / transition ceremony
Okadhiya kontsala	Place where a certain tuber pushes up at the edge of the salt pan
Okabamba kongoleke	Pan in which the namunganga receives salt
Okambulumbumbwa	Calabash resonated, braced musical bow
Okanyanga	Small area in traditional homestead where visitors are greeted
Okapamba	Small rattle (calabash)

Okapushu	Small "bag" of fat from the chest of an oryx, from which a special perfume is made for the king
Okashandja	Lamellophone
Okatoma	Mixed game without music/tag game
Okawagawaga	Scraped musical bow, mouth resonated
Okayimbilo	Song – diminutive form
Okudhana	To dance, play
Okudhenga ontunda	To beat the drum
Okufala ontanto	To praise the omufuko (by men)
Okufu thinge	Period February to March, wet season
Okuhakela	To clap
Okuhempa	To soothe a baby/to jig a child up and down to amuse it
Okuhidhika	To choose the best cattle
Okuhika	To play a musical instrument
Okukombelela	To move the feet while pounding grain
Okuku	Period from October to March, rainy season
Okukulula	To have first hair cut
Okukwata omupika	To take prisoner
Okuligola	To ululate
Okulundulula	To make variations
Okungonena	To sing low/to respond in a low voice
Okupeta	To imitate cattle horns while praising cattle
Okupita etanda	To become circumcised
Okushaluka	To make a certain body motion in dance
Okushika ompamba	To shake up/down
Okushukusha ompamba	To shake right/left
Okusindana	To win [a war]/to gain victory
Okutameka okwiimba	To start singing
Okutanga	To sing solo, leader, to praise
Okutanga oondjembo noonja idhiita	To praise the warriors
Okututula	To stamp the feet in dance
Okuyamondambo	To jump in the singing semicircle to dance
Okuyungula	To thresh grain
Okuzimina	To respond
Okwenye	Period from July to October, cool dry season
Okwiimba	To sing
Okwiimba pombanda	To sing loud, strong
Okwiitanga	To chant (praises)
Okwiiyelutha	To sing high
Oludhilu	Moving from an old homestead to a new one
Olukula	Powder from the omuguya tree
Oluthipa	Hairstyle before ohango made of a mixture of butterfat and fibre
Omagadhi goongongo	Oil extracted from marula nut
Omagongo	The period for drinking marula fruit extracts
Omagungu	Mopani worms, a delicacy prized by Ndongas
Omagadhi goontanga	Oil from pumpkin pips
Omalovu giilya	Millet beer
Omapandaanda goongamba dhombula noshilongo	Place where the namunganga takes men for salt harvesting
Omatutula	Female songs for the full moon gatherings and ohango
Omayenge	Ostrich eggs, gifts for ohango
Omihanga	Belt made of ostrich egg shell beads
Omithindo	(pl.) voices
Ompamba	Large rattle

Ompindi	Men's play, without music/ wrestling
Ompulile	Elders who announce the death of the king and play the drum/magicians
Omusindi gwegumbo	An elder who decides on the location of the king's new homestead and does the mapping of the new homestead
Omugwayo gwaakwaniilwa	Ointment made from the meat of a lion and elephant for anointing the new king
Omuhi	Pestle for pounding omahangu
Omukwaniilwa na kale no mwenyo omule	Words chanted when there is a new king "Long live your majesty"
Omukwanilwa ke kowe	The king is dead
Omukwiyu	Wild fig leaves (Ficus sycromorus) used to "doctor" aafuko food
Omumwene gwohango	Master of ohango (namunganga)
Omuthindo	(sng.) voice
Omuya gwoshilongo	Belt made from cattle skin given to the new king
Omwandi	Tree that supplies the oonyandi fruit
Ondambo yuudhano	Place where uudhano during full moon takes place, usually near the headman's home or the king's palace
Ondhilu	Partly dried up salt pan
Ondhimbo	Walking stick given to new king
Ondigolo	Ululating
Ondjayi	Best cattle, or Chief warrior, depending on context
Ondjugo	Largest room of the homestead where mother and smaller children/infants stay
Ondunda yoondjupa	Hut / shelter where milk calabashes are kept
Ondunga	Fruit from the omulunga palm
Ongoleka	Part of salt collected from pan which is given to namun ganga/also best man, depending on context
Ongolo	Stick used by girls in omungolo during full moon play
Ongoma	Drum
Ongovela	Songs for praising the cattle, on entry to the kraal, during
herding	travels, at cattle gatherings and competitions
Ondjupa	Large calabash for storing and shaking the milk
Onkandeka	Men's game with chanted words, slapping one an other's hands as competition, played at full moon
Onkuyo	Feast place during ohango
Onkulumbala	The dwelling of the previous king. To announce the king's death by beating the drum
Onkulungu	Leader
Ontaku	Traditional non-alcoholic drink ("beer") from omahangu and millet
Ontala	Father's room in homestead
Ontsakala oonyando	Area of tubers at the inside of the salt-pan perimeter
Ontunda	(sng.) drum
Oontunda	(pl.) drums
Oombe	Date-like fruit from oombe tree
Oompi (or *omalupi)*	Hand clap
Oonkoshi	Souls of dead namungangas that are transformed into lions
Oontsi	Seeds inside of rattle
Oonyandi	Fruits resembling small persimmons, eaten dry
Osheendo shomukwa miilwa	The delegation of the king
Oshende shomagongo	Songs for marula spirits/alcohol
Oshidhano shoongombe	Cattle gathering and competition with play and song

Oshiimbo	(sng.) song
Oshikolelo	Rear part of homestead
Oshikolo	Small horn used to peel or pierce the marula fruit to extract the juice in order to manufacture alcohol
Oshikilugumbo	Old (deserted) homestead
Oshimbombo	Millet (omahangu) porridge
Oshinwa	Non-alcoholic juice of the marula
Oshinyanga shamutyakemo	Area of homestead where visitors are greeted
Omuhi	Pestle, wooden stick to pound omahangu, making rhythm while singing
Oshiyuma	Traditional clay pot, pottery given as wedding gift
Ositi	Ankle rattle from oonkete fruits from oonkete tree
Uuyimbilo	Song – diminutive (pl.)
Uundangala wohango	Ohango songs
Uudhano	Dance-play with singing, drumming and clapping
Uudhingo	Bracelets or rings from palm leaves made by aafuko during their month of seclusion before wedding/transition
Uuholo	Singing game
Uuimbilo	(pl.) songs for happiness (not for work)
Uuimbilo wenyanyu lyuunona uyali	Songs for birth of twins
Uuyimbilo wokuloolola uunona	Songs for soothing infants
Uuyimbilo wontanto	Songs for praising
Uuyimbilo wuupongo	Songs for loneliness, can also be performed during wedding
to	bid bride farewell
Uuti	(pl.) wooden (concussion) sticks
Uutoni	Songs performed after a successful battle/ blood guilt

Oshikwambi terms

Edhilo	Substance mixed with eembeke, to colour it black before applying to traditional hairstyle
Eembeke	Berries from eembe bush, slightly fatty, mixed with edhilo, applied to hair
Eendjushi	Next hair stage after eepando, also refers to the little braids hanging at center back of head
Eengombe	(pl.) cattle, men's songs sung when with cattle, or bringing them home, or also to praise cattle when gathering to drink marula liquor
Eepando	Hair stage after omulenda – straight braids
Ehaneko	Aafuko sit in sun all day as test for strength and possible pregnancy
Ehonga	Song for war training / battle songs for Kwambis
Ekango	Men's songs sung when men go to / return from collecting salt
Ekoteko	3rd day olufuko, also women and girls' dance (not brides)
Endondi	(sng.) song for clapping (no dance)
Epiitho	Name-giving for baby, birth celebration
Eshiko londjupa	Men's songs for shaking milk in calabash
Ethulo	7th day olufuko, skin of cattle put in water, hairstyles re-
moved,	people depart
Etsali	(sng.) shelter in which omufuko stays during period of olufuko
Ewi	Voice
Fehu	With force
Okulila	Crying

Iikuni	(lit.) wood for fire, means special song/melody made for omufuko
Okalungongo	Braced resonated musical bow
Okambadjona okili	4th day olufuko
Okanona	Infant, baby child
Okashandja	Lamellophone
Okayagayaga	Scraped unbraced musical bow, played by men
Okufukala	To undergo the young women's traditional wedding / transformation ceremony
Okuhilola	To ululate
Okagungungu	To sing a hoeing song (women)
Okulili	To cry
Okuloola okanona	To soothe baby, sing songs for baby
Okuloola	To soothe
Okushika ondjupa	To shake the milk calabash, men's songs for shaking milk calbash
Okutanga	To praise
Okwiitheta	(lit.) parting, refers to day after funeral
Okwiiyoga	also parting, day after funeral
Oluyaya	Long, thin braids at the side of the eendjushi hairstyle, also (acc. Scherz et al.) refers to hairstyle just preceding olufuko
Omagongo	Men's songs for drinking /praising marula liquor
Omakwato	2nd day of olufuko
Omalovu	Beer made of millet meal
Omandondi	(pl.) songs for clapping (no dance)
Omatsali	(pl.) shelters in which aafuko stay during olufuko
Omatselo	6th day olufuko – day of slaughtering cattle
Ombepu	5th day olufuko

Oshimbalanhu terms

Aahenge	Not talented performers
Aafuko	(pl.) Brides (traditional wedding) or participants in the transformation
Aasama	Talented people / performers
Aanongo	talented performers
Eembuvi	3rd hairstyle stage for girls preparing for olufuko – 2 thick braids on side, 2 braids at the back, thickened with fibre from roots of baobab tree (omukwa)
Eemhandu	Clapping of hands
Eemuma	Beads around legs, beneath knees
Ekunde	2nd hairstyle stage for girls preparing for olufuko, palm leaf frond wound around thin braids or sections of hair
Eimbilo lyoupongo	Loneliness music, played when alone (self-delectation) or at a cattle post when feeling lonely
Ekwa	Front leather apron women of women's older traditional dress, probably earlier 20th century
Elende	Thin braids of women's hair back of head
Epepe (omapepe)	Shoulder (shoulders)
Iiti yoombe	Berries from yoombe tree
Ino shi kwata oto lika	(lit.) "don't touch it you get bitten", children's group playing ouvano
Meme	Grown woman/mother
Meekulu	Old woman (respectful address)/grandmother
Nangalala	With effort; also women's songs before olufuko

Ofingi	Jan. to Apr. rainy season, more planting, hoeing
Ohale	(lit.) Chorus, also songs of celebration the evening before the wedding (olufuko) – women only
Ohiya	Whistle / flute – used while dancing
Okaloololi imbilo	Soothing songs for infants
Okufu	May to August, cool dry season, wait for harvest
Okulila	Crying
Okumhenuna	Throwing of hips/skirt in swaying movement (in ouvano e.g.)
Okupandula	To clap
Okupewathana	To clap (specific to song type)
Okutumba	To shrug
Okutumba komapepe	To shrug / move shoulders in ouvano
Okututula	To stamp feet
Okututula nomuthindo	To stamp the feet with good effort
Okwenye	Sept. to Dec. hot early rain season
Oluanene	"pregnancy test" for women undergoing olufuko
Olufuko	Traditional wedding ceremony for young women, transformation ceremony
Olukula	Pinkish-red ointment used for colouring of skin and beads (nowadays a bought product)
Olupale	Threshing floor
Omafegela	4th stage hairstyle for girls preparing for olufuko – preparation for the following style – eembuvi removed and own hair braided, now ready for olufuko
Omalwa omanene	(lit.) "times big" being tested, given hard or difficult times
Omangola	Ear rings
Omanyakwa	Talented people who perform really well
Omatemo	Hoe blades (small upon large) beaten with a stick during olufuko
Omategameno imbilo	Hope songs, sung when one is hoping or expecting to find something, e.g. during hunt, or lost cattle. Hope songs can be sung as confidence songs, so these two repertoires are complementary
Omba	Shell used as important female ornamentation
Ombwiku	Men's dance-play, similar to omupembe
Omhatele	Final stage hairstyle for "married" (olufuko completed) women – thick braids wound around head and decorated with small shells
Omufuko(sng.)	bride
Omukula	Kinship lineage (father's and mother's lines)
Omukwa	Baobab tree, special tree is where full moon play takes place
Omumhwelele	Stick for beating omatemo
Omupiithi	Leader (woman) playing omatemo
Omutangi	Leader / starter of singing
Omutangumuni	Leader / starter of singing
Omutoloki	Leader / starter of singing
Omwiya	Leather belt around waists of women in traditional dress
Ondaka	Voice
Ondaka ondeka	Higher voice part in singing (chorus)
Ondaka ofupi	Lower voice part in singing
Ondjimbo yenyanyu	Happiness music, sung at various celebrations
Ondjimbo yeinyanyudho	Recreational music – large category of songs played in groups, e.g., ouvano, onghandeka, omupembe, which different song types but fall under this general category

Ondjimbo yomukumo	Confidence music, when fetching water, churning milk, renovating a house, hunting trips, or looking for lost livestock
Ondjimbo yopambepo	Religious music, sung in church as part of liturgy , including hymns and choir music
Ondulu	Strings of beads worn around hips in traditional dress, made of ostrich egg shell
Ondundwiilandjimbo	Traveling songs, e.g. to the mines, salt pans, taking cattle to a distant post. Can evolve into loneliness songs if travelling alone
Ongowela	Men's songs for cattle praising
Onguwo	Hind leather apron of women's traditional dress
Onyoka	Strings of ostrich egg shell beads worn around neck
Oshidhe	Pink/red ointment applied to beads, shells and skin – home-made type
Oshikulo	Arch through which aafuko must pass (test) during olufuko
Oshikundu shiwambo	Traditional home-brewed beer (of Aawambo)
Oshikungungu	Working song, calling people to gather for work
Oshimbwilikita	Young girls' hairstyle made with berry pips attached to short sections of hair
Oshini	Place where you pound omahango
Oshipale	Large, brackish spot, also place/floor where you thresh omahangu
Oshoto	Gathering place for people, e.g. for meals, also the area in front of the mother's room
Oupongo	Loneliness
Ouvano	Dance-play with song, clapping, stamping, whistle, mainly for women and girls (c.f. uudhano or oudano)
Tate	Mature (grown) man
Tatekulu	Aged or important man/grandfather

Oshikwaluudhi terms

Aafuko	"brides" taking part in traditional wedding ceremony or transition
Aatsali	Mature women (relatives) who accompany/chaperone aafuko to olufuko / ohango
Aayamukuli	(pl.) chorus response
Ayogolola	Game songs – pick a partner to dance-play with, mixed gender (onghenda ayogolola)
Eembiya	Clay pot for marula liquor
Ekululo	Ceremonial removal of bridal (omufuko) dress
Emhalo dhamongwa	Pounded salt kept in special container
Epiitho	(sng.) celebration for new baby about 1, 2 weeks after birth, with song
Epitotanda	Boys' initiation/circumcision, no music
Esiko lyelalo lyohango	Ceremony in which ondjaya is donned for ohango
Hango woo	Shouted by men in performance by men towards end of ohango (specifically the Uukwaluudhi part of it)
Kalili	A person who came as "messenger" from Ombalantu king to fetch aafuko, Kalili led the procession to Ombalantu many years ago
Namunganga	Master of ohango
Namunganga gwombala	Namunganga's home close to which ohango / olufuko takes place
Ofwala	Section of field where omahangu stalks are not cut, but are fired
Ohango	Traditional wedding/transformation ceremony for young women
Okayagayaga	Scraped, unbraced mouth-resonated musical bow
Okakungungu	Little songs for stamping omahangu
Okakota	Secret place where aafuko sleep
Okambulumbumbwa	Braced, gourd-resonated musical bow

Okuhakela	To clap (well), e.g. in omupembe
Okulila	To cry
Olukolo	Passing underneath a cow's flanks/chest during a healing
Olukwe	Ointment for anointing aafuko
Olushiya	Flutes/whistles, ceremony similar to ohango among San Kwaluudhi, named after flutes
Olweenene	Oshana where aafuko meet to play/perform
Omadhila	Something "like a fire" seen at certain times, causing madness or death if a woman is not initiated/ Kudu horn as a wind instrument used in initiation
Omagongo	Drinking songs for men around the clay pot containing marula liquor
Omangete	Rattles worn around ankles
Omapiitho	(pl.) ceremony celebrated in honour of the baby when the mother comes out of seclusion after the childbirth; used also to describe songs sung at the ceremony (see epiitho)
Omatemo	Concussion plaques used in ohango
Ombiya	Whirlwind, also used as a description
Omunenemukwao	Person(s) playing omatemo
Omufuko	(sng.) bride at traditional ohango
Omupembe	Men's play with song, rhythmic steps, leaping over head of dancer, clapping
Omutangi	Starter/solo singer/ praiser
Onano	Song(s) composed by bridegroom for bride, can be sung by talented singer (male) on his behalf
Ondjambi	Team work for hoeing
Ondjaya	Single long string of beads worn by omufuko over one shoulder reaching down to the opposite ankle
Ondjupa	Song sung by men while shaking/swinging the milk calabash, the two men take turns in pushing actions and singing
Onganga	Doctor, traditional healer
Onghandeka	Song-game for young men, with clapping of hands and slapping of "opponent's" hands
Onghenda	Game songs
Onghenda ayogolola	Game songs where a partner is picked, for mixed gender
Oshihoho	Game for children, trying to catch or touch one another
Oshikola	One who starts the singing
Oshinkono	Final ceremony after ohango, after which girls may go to the homes of their bridegrooms
Oshitonongo	Piece of animal skin tied around right wrist (mother's side) or left ankle (father's side)
Oshula	Sickness requiring traditional healer's healing
Otjilende	Headdress for girls after olushiya ceremony
Shenkadhi	Father's side, of family
Uudhano	Dance-play with song, clapping, whistle and ankle rattles
Uuxwi (uuhwi)	(pl.) Songs of longing when leaving home, sung by migrant labourers, sometimes with okambulumbumbwa on return home
Uusita	Songs for herding cattle home

Oshikwanyama terms

Apandalula	Clapping hands as greeting (-pand = clap)
Aitana olyelye te i pe nge yo	Last song performed for the full moon
Edhina lyandje lyoshimati	Songs for my manhood

Eenghana	Male song-game performed for cattle competition, with singing and clapping
Eenhumbu	Rhythmic games between mother and infant
Efiti oshivela	Ankle rattle
Efundula	Young women's traditional wedding / transition ceremony
Efundula la hanauka	Wedding ceremony is over, completed
Efundula ola ka oingobele	Young girls assisting at efundula
Eimbo	(sng.) song
Ekululo	First haircut
Elitango	Chanting and singing (in praise) of oneself
Enyakwa	Leader
Epasha	Twins
Epasha oli li moshimeno	First month of twins, must remain indoors
Epasha tali dimo	The day when twins are first taken outside
Etaula lakula	March
Eumbo eli hali putifwa omafundula	Hut (house) built for efundula ceremony
Kombada yongubu	Outside the fence, from where the cattle come for the competition
Naitana	Courtship dance
Ohambo	Moving from home (the house) to the fields
Oiimbo	(pl.) songs
Oimbodi	Herbs eaten by girls every day of efundula
Okambadjona	Second day of efundula
okaombexuxwa	First day of efundula
Okashandja	Lamellophone
Okayaaya	Scraped musical bow with mouth resonator
Okudana	To dance
Okudenga	To beat (omahangu)
Okufu	Period from May to June when eefukwa(ground nuts) ripen
Okufukita	To play drum during efundula
Okuhulifa	To stop singing
Okutwa	To stamp omahangu
Okulitanga	To chant
Okulombo	Period from February to March
Okupandula	To clap (together)
Okushika	To play a musical instrument / (shake milk calabash)
Okutanga ongombe	To chant praise for the cattle
Okutongomona	To chant for oneself
Okutwaa olushuno	To go back after 4 days to the girl's family
Okuxua	To threshing
Okwenye	August, moving back from the lands to the house/dry season from August to beginning of October
Okwiimba	To sing
Oluvanda	Place for the cattle competition
Omakola	Scraped bow made with two large calabashes
Omalende	Shells in bride's hair for efundula
Ombadjeyakula	3rd day of efundula
Ombwaka	Young man's clothes for wedding
Ompiyifi	Circumcised man
Omudani	Dancer-player of oudano
Omuuhalo	4th day of efundula
Omuhoveli woshiimbo	One who starts the singing
Omunghelo	Song performed when a man has killed a lion (nowadays for entertainment)
Omushi	Stick/pestle to pound omahangu

Ongalilo	Kwanyama endblown flute
Ondaka	Melody/ Voice
Ondudu	Healer
Onghandeka	Men's play without singing
Onghinda	Bag full of chicken bones carried by bride to her husband's house
Ongoma	(sng.) Drum
Ongowela	Melody
Ongovela	Songs for praising the cattle
Ongovela yange ame mwene	Songs for praising oneself
Ongovela yeengombe	Praise songs for cattle
Ongovela yeengombe tadi dana	Praise songs for cattle during competition
Ongovela yometembu	Praise songs for cattle when moving from the house to the farmlands
Onguo yongombe ilaula onyoko	Black cattle skin garment for wedding
Oshikalakala	Foot/ankle rattle used in efundula, from fruit nut
Oshiimbo	(sng.) song
Oshiimbo shamati	Song for boys, performed for full moon
Oshiimbo shefundula	Song for efundula
Oshiimbo shefundula loomeme	Song for women at efundula
Oshiimbo shefundula loshilumenhu	Song for men at efundula
Oshiimbo shoihanangolo	Song for oihanangolo, new brides who completed efundula, before going back home
Oshiimbo shokuhelela	Song for hoeing
Oshiimbo shokuxwa	Song for stamping (grains)
Oshiimbo shokunyakula ovanhu	Song for entertainment - oudano
Oshiimbo sholukula	Song for olukula (red ochre)
Oshiimbo shomakola	Song for healing (with omakola)
Oshiimbo shomaluodi	Song for fighting
Oshiimbo shomaongo	Song for marula alcohol
Oshiimbo shoukadona	Song for girls performed at full moon play
Oshiimbo shounona	Song for (smaller) children
Oshiti	Wooden pestle to beat omahangu
Oshitemo	Iron hoe blade, group of people invited to hoe/work
Oudano nepasha	Play-dance for twins, ceremony for naming twins
Oudano oukadhona	Female entertainment oudano performed during cattle competition
Ovaimbi	Singers
Ovaitaveli	People who respond to a song
Ovaimbi tava itavele	Chorus singers, response singers
Ovapanduli	People who clap
Oyoonda	Payment from groom's parents to bride's parents
Pandula	Clapping
Taula	March
Outa	Hunting bow with resonator

Oshingandjera terms

Ayilala	A special day after ohango when bride (at home) comes out
Aanuudhano	People participating in uudhano
Aatsali	Women who accompany/chaperone aafuko to ohango
Aayiteeli	People who respond to a song
Eempi	Clapping (pronounced eemhi)
Eendago	Beads made from eendago at oshana
Eengoma	(pl.) drums
Eimbilo	(sng.) song

(omaimbilo)	(pl.) (songs)
Eimbo	Singing
(omaimbo)	(pl.) singing
Epiitho	Ceremony for baby shortly after birth, including songs (sng.)
Eepitho	(pl.) as above
Eetupapa	(pl.) necklaces from carved omuhongo wooden beads
Epiititho (eepitifo)	Infant's naming ceremony
Ekoteko	Dance for memes (mothers) during ohango
Ekululo	Ceremony which finally frees omufuko to marry
Emembesila	Two baskets of omahangu placed in front of omufuko on Ayilala day
Emuthindo	Stamping of feet in uudhano
Eshisha	Large storage basket for dry food on legs with roof
Etapakano	Belt made from leather, given to baby at epiitho
Iihidhi	Herbs
Iipando	(pl.) hornlike braids that form part of aafuko hairstyle
Iiyela	Metal beads on edge of women's front apron and around ankles
Imba	Sing
Inamumwe	Special food (stew-like dish) prepared after birth of twins at epiitho
Namunganga	"master of ceremonies" for ohango, organiser, aafuko stay at his/her home in special huts
Ohango	Traditional wedding for young women (nowadays refers mainly to modern Christian wedding)
Ohango ayilala	As ayilala above
Okaale	Large open space at traditional homestead
Okakungungu	Stamping songs sung for work when people come to help
Okambulumbumbwa	Braced, gourd-resonated musical bow
Okasipa	Smallish ivory button or bead, can be used instead of omba shell
Okayagayaga	Scraped unbraced mouth resonated musical bow, used when aafuko walk to ohango
Okayo	Clay pot with wide mouth
Okudhana	To play, to dance
Okukulula	To ceremonially remove omufuko's wedding clothes and anoint her with special ointment
Okuligola	To ululate
Okutanha	Play of fathers (and praise) at omawoolo at end of ohango
Okutupa omongwa	"to take salt from the pan", used when young man has brought back salt from his expedition, given goat or cow
Okuyoga epasha	To splash herb water splashed around dwelling by onganga after birth of twins
Okwaakela	Clapping
Olufuko	Traditional wedding rites/transformation for young women, used interchangeably with ohango in this area
Olukwe	Ointment made of butter and dye mixed in a tortoiseshell, used as special body anointment by women
Olukalwa	(sng.) dwelling, homestead
Olweenene	2nd day of ohango, go to oshana to perform uudhano yolufuko
Omagwe	Necklace of larger, transparent glass beads worn by women with children
Omambudju	(pl.) calabashes for beer

Omandondi	Stamping feet
Omanandja	Men's leaping, singing, clapping dance-game, similar to omupembe
Omashisha	(pl.) storage baskets for food
Omatemo	(pl.) Concussion plaques (hoe blades), one struck against the other, used during ohango
Omawoolo	3rd day of ohango in Ongandjera, when cattle are slaughtered, also given as omayolo (below)
Omayolo	Alternative to omawoolo
Omayomboloko	Ceremony where brides remove the bridal dress (onguwo dress)
Omba	large flattish white shell worn at the back of the neck at tached to a string of beads
Ombanza yongombe	Cattle skin in which king is wrapped for burial
Ombendo	Whistle worn around neck, blown in uudhano
Ompamba	Scooping/drinking vessel made from calabash cut in half
Ompuku	Traditional red coloured/striped skirt, pronounced omhuku
Omuudhano	An uudhano player
Omuhongo	Tree found in Oukwanyama, its hard wood used for otupapa necklace beads/ tamboti
Omuhuya	Rope-like strips of Mopani bark, used to tie palisades – or beat the parents of twins
Omukomesho	Leader or starter singer
Omulende	Long thin braids of hair or fibre hanging down a woman's back
Omupiithi gweehango	Namunganga for ohango
Omutisha	Circular head dress shaped like a ball on back of married woman's head, with a straight medium length braid emerging at the back
Omutooli	Midwife
Omutsali	(sng.) woman who accompanies/chaperones omufuko to ohango
Omuvalithi	Midwife
Omwaanga	Strings of ostrich shell beads laced and worn by women around hips over skirt
Omuya	Leather or sealskin belt worn by women around waist
Ondembe	Leather front apron of woman's dress
Ondete	Necklace from grass stalks and beads
Ondhikwa	Leather (skin) bag for carrying baby on back
Ondiwu	Ostrich egg shell necklace given to baby at epiititho
Ondjambi	Songs sung for work, when people come to help, hoeing songs
Ondjendje	Thin strings of glass beads
Ondjugo	Woman's room
Ondjimbo	(sng.)song
Oondjimbo	(pl.) songs
Onganga	Healer, doctor
Ongoma (sng.)	Drum
Ongongi	Harmonica, "mouth organ"
Onguta	Food prepared for the person who undertakes a trip, type of food (chicken?)
Onguwo	Bridal (omufuko) dress
Onkingile	Talented performer (singer/dancer) – term used by older people
Onkulungu	Talented person, starter (solo) singer

Onteta	Cloth front apron of women's dress
Onyoka	Ostrich egg shell beads worn around the neck of women
Oshigandhi	(sng.) large woven basket on legs with roof, for storage of dry foods
Iigandhi	(pl.) as above
Oshike shetu eta	(lit.) "What has made us come here?" songs sung by men and women at epiitho in front of ondjugo at oshoto, with clapping, dance, kicking motions, no instruments
Oshimbudju	(sng.) calabash for beer
Oshini	Pounding area
Oshipando	(sng.) horn-like curved braid of hair and fibre, worn by aafuko
Oshipela	Rear leather apron of women's old traditional dress
Oshizimba	Special fragrant powder carried between breasts
Oshoto	A round uncovered enclosure for assembling , for social gathering, and rituals , also in front of woman's room
Oshungi	To gather at oshoto for social evening gathering
Oshuupagela	Traditional home brewed beer
Otali	A big thing
Otupapa	(sng.) necklace from omugongo wood and beads
Shenkadhi	Godfather from father's side, relative on father's side to whom omufuko goes after ohango
Uudhano	Dance-play with songs, clapping, singing and drum

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How does a peoples' music reflect their history, their occupations, cultural beliefs and values?

These are the core questions that this book addresses in relation to the Aawambo people of Namibia. The author, herself born and bred in Namibia, brings to the fore the nuanced views of different people, describing their personal musical experiences — past as well as present. This is the first time that the music and stories of contemporary Namibian musicians is shared alongside those of the elderly. Similarly, it is the first time that some of the traditional Aawambo dances are analysed and described, abundantly illustrated with colourful photographs and several songs.

Based on years of personal research, this book will appeal to research scholars, students and other interested readers alike, since its style is accessible but detailed, personal yet objective. Recommended for all those interested in culture, anthropology, the arts, and Namibian studies.

Minette Mans is a Namibian born academic, previously Associate Professor in the field of music, dance and education. She has published several books and many scientific articles that often cover the field from a Namibian perspective, and has performed field research mainly in the northern regions of the country. Her national and international experience as educator, writer and consultant has come to fruition in this easy to read, yet information laden book about the music of her country.

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